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A HUNDRED YEARS OF GLORY.

BY EBEN E. REXFORD.

From sea to sea, across the land,
What shouts of joy are ringing,
And all the mountains understand
The spirit of our singing.
The palm-tree whispers to the pine
The nation's birthday glory,
And earth and sea and sky combine
To tell the happy story.
Oh! wait it, winds, across the sea,
In mighty exultation,
The century-flower of Liberty
Has burst to crown the nation.
Flash out upon a thousand hills,
Oh, banner, bright with glory!
The voices of ten thousand hills
Take up the exultant story.
The thunder-voices of cannon rend
Heaven's blue with their emotion,
And echoes from the mountains send
The tidings back to ocean.
Oh! wait it, winds, across the sea,
In mighty exultation,
The century-flower of Liberty
Has burst to crown the nation.
Thank God! to-day the nation stands
Triumphant o'er affliction,
The Old World stretches kindly hands,
And peace gives benediction.
From sea to sea, from gulf to lakes
Repeat the exultant story—
The morn of a new century breaks,
A hundred years of glory.
Oh! wait it, winds, across the sea,
In mighty exultation,
The century-flower of Liberty
Has burst to crown the nation.
Oh, God, who for a hundred years
The nation's footsteps guided,
Through smiling days and days of tears,
Preserve it undivided.
Go Thou before, and lead us on
To higher fame and glory,
By pure hands sought and true hands won,
Earth's grandest, noblest story!
Oh! wait it, winds, across the sea,
In mighty exultation,
The century-flower of Liberty
Has burst to crown the nation.

BIG GEORGE.

The Giant of the Gulch:

OR, THE FIVE OUTLAW BROTHERS.

BY JOSEPH E. BADGER, JR.,
AUTHOR OF "LITTLE VOLCANO, THE BOY MI-
NER," "OLD BULL'S-EYE," "PACIFIC
PETE," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER VII.

THE DEAD BEARS WITNESS.

Just as the fugitive sunk panting to the ground at the feet of the exultant, cursing bummer—just as Gin Cocktail started back in open-mouthed amazement at the wonderful revelation his desecrating clutch had made apparent to more distant eyes than his own—a shrill yell of angry vengeance, mingling with a pistol-shot, filled the air, and the bummer fell headlong to the ground, tearing and biting the earth in his agony, his hot blood sprinkling over the white neck and bosom of the senseless woman—until now known only as "Soft Tommy."

Well used though they were to wild scenes and startling surprises, the crowd stood irresolute, while the person who had so signally avenged Soft Tommy, rushed to the spot, and stooping, raised the senseless figure to his broad breast, confronting the diggers with an angry glare, as he half-raised the pistol, from the muzzle of which still curled a faint blue thread of smoke.

"Me first—you must take me first!" he cried, in a sharp, grating voice. "Fifty to one—and he a poor sick boy! That's the kind of men you are—back there!" and the young fellow leveled his weapon. "We're half white and free-born! We're not dogs, that you—"

At that moment the revolver was dextrously knocked from his grasp, and a pair of stout arms pinioned him fast, despite his furious struggling, while a clear voice muttered in his ear:

"Don't be a fool, man! Submit quietly and I'll save you yet. Keep on with such fool play, and I wouldn't give a straw for your chance. They'll kill you and hee."

No sooner was it plain that the bold talking stranger had been secured and disarmed, than the very men who had slunk back from the frowning muzzle of his revolver, crowded forward, brandishing knife and pistol, uttering furious yells and curses, demanding the heart's blood of the murderer.

"Stand by me, Bart Noble!" hurriedly cried Little Cassino, as he shifted his grasp and drew a weapon. Then raising his voice, as he boldly stepped before the stranger, whose arms were filled with the senseless fugitive, he cried aloud: "Soft and easy does it, boys. The day is not so old yet but we will have plenty of time to settle this affair in a decent, gentlemanly manner. Take it cool—"

"He killed a man—"

"Easy, Roaring Tom—don't be so brash. There's not one particle of evidence that Salspeter was murdered by these—"

"Luck at your feet—ain't that enough! A man shot down jest 'cause he was 'resin' 'arrun-away from justice—"

"An' sarved 'im no more'n right, too—the onagly parjurous whisky-skin!" retorted Bart Noble. "What he said was one lie from A to Amperand—"

"A foul lie it was, gentlemen," interrupted the doctor; "and the proof lies before your face!" he added, stepping aside and pointing toward the two—the fugitive and the man who had come so opportunely to the rescue.

Little Cassino had not counted without his host. The angry, snarling cries died away like



"Out, boys—quick!" hissed Big George. "If there is anybody spying 'round us, smell 'em out, and—"

magic. As if by one accord, the knives which had been brandished, the revolvers which had been cocked, were returned to their scabbards. They saw what had so surprised Gin Cocktail. Though a loving hand was striving to cover them from sight, the white-skinned neck and bosom still showed through the torn garments—too fair, too beautiful for other than a woman.

"There is your answer—a woman, God bless the name!" and Little Cassino bared his head. "A woman, weak and helpless—scarce more than a girl. And this is the murderer of Salspeter—see stout and as good a man as ever trod in shoe-leather—a man who never met his equal in fair fight, knife or pistol, tooth and toe-nail, fair fist or rough-and-tumble—yet the man, as you call him, Roaring Tom—Gin Cocktail, swears that she murdered Salspeter! Why, if the angel Gabriel himself were to come down and make oath to that, no man in his seven senses could believe him. It is out of nature, gentlemen—as you must confess. And then—"

not satisfied with trying to swear away the life of an innocent woman, the malicious little devil must add insult to injury—"

"I don't reckon he knowed who she was, Doc," said Roaring Tom, in a remarkably subdued tone for him. "She a'ways passed for a man or boy. Then she tried to run away—"

"And why not? why shouldn't she run away, if she liked? A woman isn't a man—and I thank the Lord she isn't! Such a sight—such a terrible accusation—was enough to frighten the seventeen senses out of any woman—let alone your ugly mugs around her. I don't blame her for running—I only wonder she stood it as long as she did—"

"Thank you, sir, for your generous defense of my—my wife," said the man—none other than he who was popularly known as "Sneaky." "I don't know what all this means, but I'm ready to make good anything she has said or done—"

"Spoken like a white man—give me your paw, youngster!" cried Bart Noble. "You hear that, gentlemen! Ain't that a plenty? Kin any more be said? Let's quit all this growlin' an' snarl'n, an' come back to the point. I reckon a little quiet talkin' 'll settle the hull thing. How is it?"

"We don't want no more'n what's right, judges," replied Roaring Tom. "It *did* look kinder rough for a man to shoot down a feller-critter as wasn't thinkin' 'thout givin' him a chance to fend himself; but of it's as he says—of she is his wife, why, I don't see how anybody kin blame him fer cuttin' 'er rusty when he sees another man grapplin' 'er so rough like as Gin Cocktail was. An' bein' as she is a woman, why—how is it, boys? I fer one vote not guilty—that thar ain't no manner o' proof ag'inst her—an' that Gin Cocktail only got what he desarved fer tellin' such a ongentlemanly, double-an'-twisted lie about a innocent woman-critter—amen!"

"Talk's cheap, Roaring Tom," doggedly interrupted Woodpecker. "Talk's cheap, but 'twon't bring Salspeter back to life, nor it won't keep my word o' revenge. Gin Cocktail ain't all a fool. Taint likely he'd say so much of he didn't hev somethin' to back it up. Ef them two is innocent, it's no more'n right they should prove it. Let 'em tell the judge what they was last night, an' what they was doin'."

"You hain't no objection to that?" asked Noble, turning to Sneaky, who was soothed the now conscious woman as best he could.

"I was on my own business; what that was, matters nothing to you or them," was the sharp reply.

"Thar's more ways than one to open a critter's jaws as kin speak an' won't," growled a beetle-browed digger.

"Now don't go to bitin' your own nose off, friend," added Noble, lowering his voice. "The boys is worked up mighty high, an' 'twouldn't take much more to set 'em a bilin' over—then look out for scalded shins! Take a fool's advice, an' speak to 'em civil—fer her sake, of not your own."

"That he'll do—I answer for him, gentlemen," cried Little Cassino, who had been bending over the growling bummer. "Just be patient for a moment, and you shall know the whole truth. You, Bart, just rig up your jury again, please; back at the old place. You go with them, friend. Believe me, I am speaking for your own good; I give you my word as a man."

The young miner had by this time cooled down sufficiently to realize the good sense of this advice, and first slipping his own coat over the shoulders of his companion, he accompanied Bart Noble back to the spot where the unfortunate Salspeter still lay in his rude coffin.

Little Cassino watched them depart, with a quizzical grin upon his face, then turned to where the wounded man lay, shaking him roughly by the arm. With a hollow groan the wretch opened his eyes.

"Oh! doctor, I feel mighty bad—can't you do somethin' fer me? Cure me up an' I'll—I'll give you gold—gold tell you can't rest! Do somethin'—"

"You had better be thinking of your *latter end*, poor fellow," replied Little Cassino, in a preternaturally solemn tone, though there was a malicious twinkle in his eye as it glanced toward the bummer's "seat of honor," where the rags were besmeared with blood. "Mortal aid can avail nothing in such an extremity as yours. Make your peace—say your prayers, if you know any—confess your sins, and then die like a white man."

"I can't die—I ain't fit to die!" moaned the terrified wretch; and then he broke into a torrent of mingled curses and prayers, so horrible, so blasphemous, that the doctor turned aside with a shudder of disgust and horror.

But he had a part to play, and choking down his aversion, he returned to the charge. With no little adroitness he played upon the fears of the coward, making him believe that death was inevitable, that his very moments were numbered, and urging him to confess his sins as he hoped to escape utter damnation in the world to come.

"You will be easier, then. With all weight off your mind, you can die like a gentleman, at peace with yourself and everybody else," added the doctor.

"I will—I'll do it," gasped Gin Cocktail. "Call 'em, quick! I feel I'm goin'—goin' fast!" and he burst into another fit of raving.

Little Cassino lost no time, but summoned the party, bidding judge and jury open their ears to the dying man's confession. Firmly believing that he was at death's door, Gin Cocktail acknowledged that his evidence was all false—that he knew nothing against the prisoners, making a clean breast and offering to swear that he was now speaking the truth.

"That'll do," said Little Cassino, unable to longer conceal his disgust. "Get up, you pitiful coward! The bullet only grazed your haunches—a pity it didn't go deeper! Gentlemen, form a line—and here's a compliment to start with!"

Lifting the bewildered bummer to his feet, the doctor faced him toward the double line, then drew back his foot and saluted the bum-

mer's scored parts with a vigorous kick that sent him fairly within the gantlet. Tossed from hand to hand, from boot to boot, Gin Cocktail was hurtled along the lines with greater speed than ceremony, finally sinking down upon the sand, a bruised and bleeding mass of wretchedness, the contemptuous yells and laughter of the heavy-booted diggers ringing in his mortified ears.

Woodpecker alone took no share in the sport—or punishment—neither by laugh nor deed, and when it was over, he slowly and heavily shuffled back to where his "pard" lay. For a moment he stood beside the coffin as if petrified; then an angry yell drew the attention of all save that of the growling bummer toward him. They saw him stoop and pick up something from the dead man's breast—something that shone and glittered in the sunlight, and bearing a square bit of something white upon its shaft.

The crowd rushed eagerly forward. In silence Woodpecker extended his hand to Little Cassino. He held a short, slender dagger, which he had plucked from the dead man's bosom. Upon the polished blade was a bit of paper, bearing large, plain characters, which, in a low, wondering voice, the doctor read aloud.

"NUMBER 41 IN MEMORY OF JOAQUIN MURETA."

Such were the words—terribly significant to all who were conversant with that tragedy; such was the evidence borne by the dead!

CHAPTER VIII.

A ROMANCE IN DISGUISE.

In awe-stricken silence the crowd received these words. Only their eyes roved swiftly around, filled with doubt, suspicion—even superstition. Scarce five minutes had elapsed since they were all gathered around the coffin, since Woodpecker had left the side of his murdered friend to hearken to the confession of Gin Cocktail; the paper was not there then. Though no person had been keeping particular watch, it would have been little short of impossible for anybody to have paused near the corpse during that period, unseen. There could be but one solution; the messenger must have watched his chance and drove the dagger home just as the crowd was hastening to obey the summons of Little Cassino. Granting this, he must still be among them—but who? With a wolfish glare, Woodpecker's eyes roved over every face, but even the instinct of deadly hatred and burning vengeance failed to read more than doubt, wonder and fear.

But then the oppressive silence was broken by a husky voice from the crowd, gasping, unsteadily:

"Let me out—I want air—I'm chokin'!" and a man staggered out from the press, reeling like a drunken man.

More closely than ever did Woodpecker resemble a wolf, as, with bared knife, he sidled, crouching, toward the miner. But a quick eye read his suspicions and a stout hand closed upon his arm like a vise, as Bart Noble muttered in his ear:

"Easy, pard—don't go off at hafe-cock! That ain't your game—don't you see? It's Hammer Tom—one o' Harry Love's boys—that message has made him sick, an' I don't wonder, neither!"

"Somebody done it—somebody who's in this crowd now! Ef I only knowed who!" panted Woodpecker, licking his parched lips as the long knife quivered in his grasp, and his blood-shot eyes roved over the crowd. "Jest fer

one little minnit—that's all I'd ax. I'd be ready to go then—I'd sell my soul to the devil for jest one minnit! It's monstrous hard to know he's right onder my grip—a-hearin' my voice this minnit, an' yit not know whar to strike. It makes a feller feel like they wasn't no God!"

"Come," muttered Little Cassino, touching Sneaky upon the shoulder. "There is nothing more to keep us here, and it isn't a pleasant sight. And your—the lady looks ill."

"One moment," and the young miner raised his voice. "Gentlemen, you must be satisfied now that we—I and my wife—had no hand in this affair. Still, if there are any more questions to ask, you will find me at my cabin yonder. Come, Josie—have courage—the blind fools see their mistake now."

"I trust you do not include me in that category," half laughed Little Cassino.

"No indeed! only for you, I— But I cannot tell you now, all I would like. Some other time—when I can look calmly back on what she—"

"If it's all the same to you, we'll drop that, right here. If there's one thing I detest more than another, it is undeserved thanks. But come—I will see you safe to your shanty. I give you warning, friend, that you are likely to find me something of a bore. Though I believe this is the first time we have met, I've heard of you—so much that it will not be my fault if we don't become good friends. Besides—if you won't think me too inquisitive—there are some questions I would like to ask you—"

"Anything I can do for you, believe me, I will, only too gladly," was the earnest response.

There were few more words spoken, as the trio pressed on toward the little cabin at the mouth of the gulch. The woman, though still pale and trembling, seemed to gather fresh strength and courage as they left the rough gathering behind them, and Little Cassino caught himself stealing more than one interested glance toward the being who had so long passed among the miners for a boy—Soft Tommy. He could see—despite the sun-browned skin, the rude, ill-fitting garments, the short hair—that, in a more becoming garb, she would be good-looking, if not positively handsome. Her features were delicate, almost classical. These, with the timid air, the gentle, almost deprecating manner in which she habitually moved about, had given her the sobriquet, Soft Tommy.

Little Cassino found the interior of the cabin, though small and poorly furnished, neat as a new pin, and—a new sensation to him—he paused at the threshold, glancing ruefully down at his hands and clothes, still bearing strong marks of his recent surgical efforts. Sneaky divined his thoughts, and spoke to Josie, as he picked up an iron kettle.

"We will go to the spring for a wash, little one. Meantime, if you feel able, you can put out some grub—anything cold will do. I haven't eaten since yesterday noon."

Refreshed by their rude bath, the two men sat down beneath the bushy oak beside the bubbling spring. They both seemed troubled, and for some minutes remained in silence. The young miner was first to speak.

"I'll do it!" he cried, impulsively, striking his clenched hand against the soft turf. "You're a stranger to me, but there's something tells me I can trust you—and I will, too!"

"There's nothing would please me better," laughed Little Cassino. "And yet—remember I am a stranger."

"You won't be one long, if I can help it. I'm not much on the talk, but I can feel enough for two. You saved my life—and hers. That bull-headed crowd would have made quick work of it, once they were started. For myself, it wouldn't matter so much, but *her*—I'd have died rather than have had her even touched by a rough finger—"

"The feeling does you credit, though it's not every husband would say as much," dryly observed the doctor.

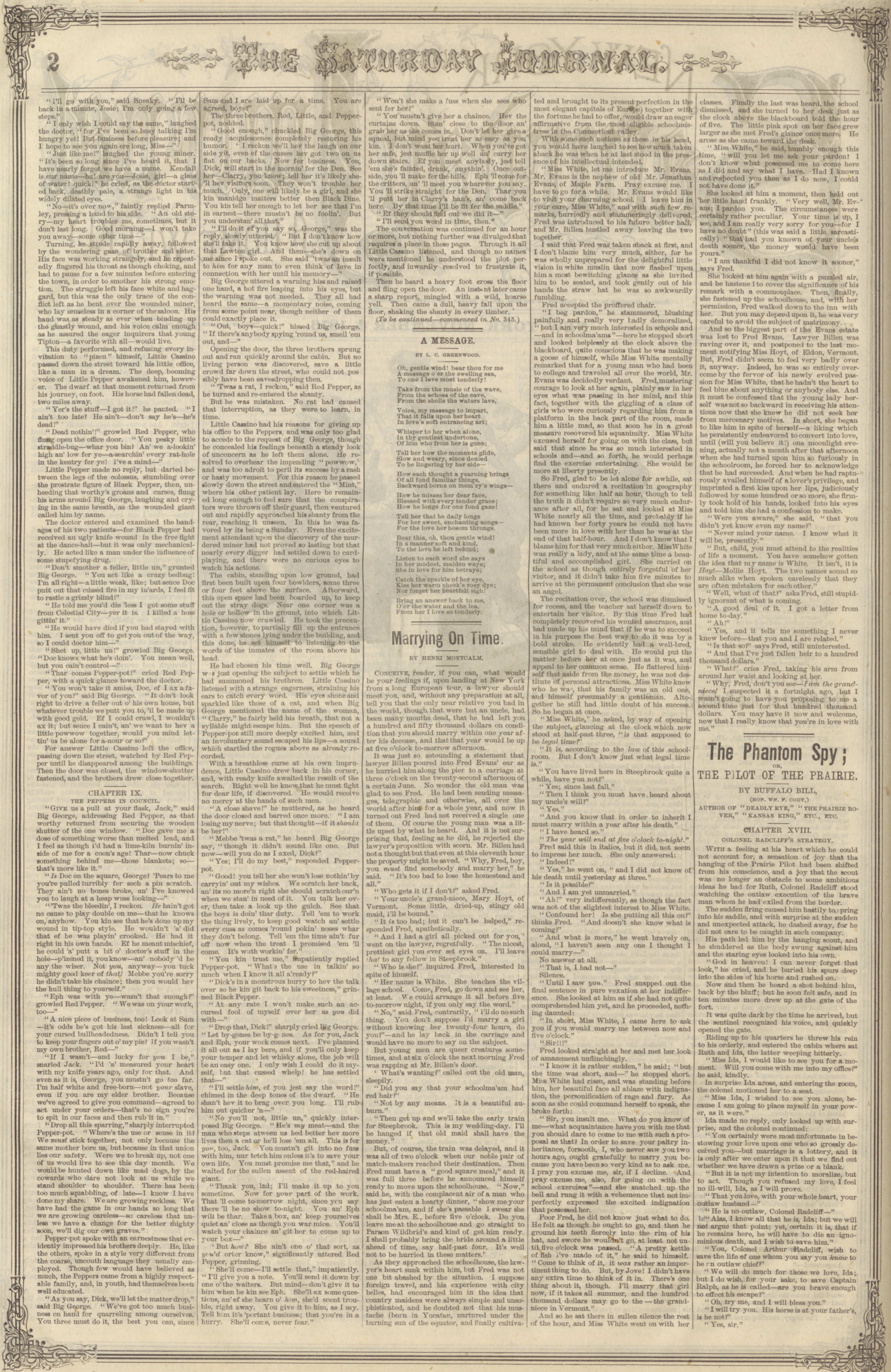
"There it is—that's just what I've been thinking over. She isn't my wife—though I said so to those fellows. I thought it might save trouble in the end. But I know I can trust you. Josie is my sister."

"You can trust me," simply replied Little Cassino. "I don't pretend to be a saint. I'm what most people would call a tough nut—fit for the devil's own cracking. But I never yet went back on a friend—be sure I'll not begin with you."

Further speech was checked by a call from Josie, who met them at the door, blushing prettily in a neat garb more suited to her real sex, and though only of calico, right well she graced it, as Little Cassino was fain to confess. The introduction over—a brief enough one: "Josie, this is Doctor Parmlay"—no more, the trio sat down to their delayed breakfast, and Little Cassino exerted his best powers, not altogether in vain, to clear away the cloud which still hung over his new-found friends. How long he might have delayed—for he found a strong, not unpleasant excitement in drawing out the gentle-voiced maiden, in watching her mobile features, the changing color as her soft blue eyes drooped before his admiring gaze—but a shuffling footstep was heard, and a coarse voice hailed him:

"You're wanted over to Reddy's, Doc. Bush Tipton's wound's done broke out ag'in, an' I reckon he'll bled to death ef you don't make haste mighty lively!"

"Tell them I'll be there in five minutes. A fine young fellow; he got cut last night, at the dance-hall, though I don't believe he was in the fight himself."



"I'll go with you," said Sneaky. "I'll be back in a minute, Josie; I'm only going a few steps."

"I only wish I could say the same," laughed the doctor, "for I've been so busy talking I'm hungry yet! But business before pleasure; and I hope to see you again ere long, Miss—"

"Just like me!" laughed the young miner. "It's been so long since I've heard it, that I have nearly forgot we have a name. Kendall is our name—ha! are you—Josie, girl—a glass of water!"

"No—it's over now," faintly replied Parmley, pressing a hand to his side. "An old story—my heart troubles me, sometimes, but it don't last long. Good morning—I won't take you away—some other time—"

Turning, he strode rapidly away, followed by the wondering gaze of brother and sister. His foot was working strangely, and he repeatedly fingered his throat as though choking, and had to pause for a few minutes before entering the town, in order to smother his strong emotion. The struggle left his face white and haggard, but this was the only trace of the conflict left as he bent over the wounded miner, who lay senseless in a corner of the saloon. His hand was as steady as ever when binding up the ghastly wound, and his voice calm enough as he assured the eager inquirers that young Tipton—a favorite with all—would live.

This duty performed, and refusing every invitation to "pizen" himself, Little Cassino passed down the street toward his little office, like a man in a dream. The deep, booming voice of Little Pepper awakened him, however. The dwarf at that moment returned from his journey, on foot. His horse had fallen dead, two miles away.

"Yer's the stuff—I got it!" he panted. "I ain't too late! He ain't—don't say he's—he's dead!"

"Dead nothin'!" growled Red Pepper, who flung open the office door. "You pesky little straddle-bug—what you bin? An' we a-lookin' high an' low fer ye—a-searchin' every rat-hole in the kentry fer ye! I've a mind—"

Little Pepper made no reply, but darted between the legs of the colossus, stumbling over the prostrate figure of Black Pepper, then, unheeding that worthy's groans and curses, flung his arms around Big George, laughing and crying in the same breath, as the wounded giant called him by name.

The doctor entered and examined the bandages of his two patients—for Black Pepper had received an ugly knife wound in the free right at the dance-hall—but it was only mechanically. He acted like a man under the influence of some stupefying drug.

"Don't smother a feller, little un," grunted Big George. "You act like a crazy beag! I'm all right—a little weak, like, but since Doc put out that cussed fire in my inards, I feel fit to rattle a grizzly blind!"

"He told me you'd less I got some stuff from Celestial City—yer it is. I killed a hoss gittin' it."

"He would have died if you had stayed with him. I sent you off to get you out of the way, so I could doctor him—"

"Shet up, little un!" growled Big George. "Doc knows what he's doin'. You mean well, but you can't control—"

"Thar comes Pepper-pot!" cried Red Pepper, with a quick glance toward the doctor.

"You won't take it amiss, Doc, ef I ax a favor of you!" said Big George. "It don't look right to drive a feller out o' his own house, but whatever trouble we put you to, I'll be made up with good gold. Ef I could crawl, I wouldn't ax it; but since I can't, an' we want to hev a little powwow together, would you mind lettin' us be alone for a-nour or so?"

For answer Little Cassino left the office, passing down the street, watched by Red Pepper until he disappeared among the buildings. Then the door was closed, the window-shutter fastened, and the brothers drew close together.

CHAPTER IX. THE PEPPERS IN COUNCIL.

"GIVE us a pull at your flask, Jack," said Big George, addressing Red Pepper, as that worthy returned from securing the wooden shutter of the one window. "Doc gave me a dose of something worse than melted lead, and I feel as though I'd had a lime-kiln burnin' inside of me for a coon's age! Thar—now chuck something behind me—those blankets; so—that's more like it."

"Is Doc on the square, George? 'Pears to me you're pulled turrible fer sich a pin scratch. They ain't no bones broke, an' I've knowed you to laugh at a heap worse lookin'—"

"'Twas the bleedin', I reckon. He hain't got no cause to play double on me—that he knows on, anyhow. You kin see that he's done up my wound in tip-top style. He wouldn't 'a' did that ef he was playin' crooked. He had it right in his own hands. Ef he meant mischief, he could 'a' put a bit o' doctor's stuff in the hole—pizened it, you know—an' nobody'd be any the wiser. Not you, anyway—you tuck mighty good keer of that! Mebbe you're sorry he didn't take his chance; then you would hev the hull thing to yourself."

"Eph was with ye—wasn't that enough?" growled Red Pepper. "We was on your work, too—"

"A nice piece of business, too! Look at Sam—it's odds he's got his last sickness—all for your cursed bullheadedness. Didn't I tell you to keep your fingers out o' my pie? If you wasn't my own brother, Red—"

"If I wasn't—and lucky for you I be," snarled Jack. "I'd 'a' measured your heart with my knife years ago, only for that. And even as it is, George, you mustn't go too far. I'm half white and free-born—not your slave, even if you are my elder brother. Because we've agreed to give you command—agreed to act under your orders—that's no sign you're to git in our faces and then rub it in."

"Drop all this sparring," sharply interrupted Pepper-pot. "Where's the use or sense in it? We must stick together, not only because the same mother bore us, but because in that union lies our safety. Were we to break up, not one of us would live to see this day month. We would be hunted down like mad dogs, by the cowards who dare not look at us while we stand shoulder to shoulder. There has been too much squabbling of late—I know I have done my share. We are growing reckless. We have had the game in our hands so long that we are growing careless—so careless that unless we have a change for the better mighty soon, we'll dig our own graves."

Pepper-pot spoke with an earnestness that evidently impressed his brothers deeply. He, like the others, spoke in a style very different from the coarse, uncouth language they usually employed. Though few would have believed as much, the Peppers came from a highly respectable family, and, in youth, had themselves been well educated.

"As you say, Dick, we'll let the matter drop," said Big George. "We've got too much business on hand for quarreling among ourselves. You three must do it, the best you can, since

Sam and I are laid up for a time. You are agreed, boys?"

The three brothers, Red, Little, and Pepper-pot, nodded.

"Good enough," chuckled Big George, this ready acquiescence completely restoring his humor. "I reckon we'll hev the laugh on our side yet, even ef the cusses hev got two on us flat on our backs. Now fer business. You, Dick, will start in the mornin' for the Den. See her—Clarry, you know; tell her it's likely she'll hev visitors soon. They won't trouble her much. Only, one will likely be a girl, and she kin manidge matters better than Black Dine. You kin tell her enough to let her see that I'm in earnest—there mustn't be no foolin'. But you understand all that."

"I'll do it ef you say so, George," was the reply, slowly uttered. "But I don't know how she'll take it. You know how she cut up about that Lawton girl. And then—she's down on me since I spoke out. She said 'twas an insult to him for any man to even think of love in connection with her until his memory—"

Big George uttered a warning hiss and raised one hand, a hot fire leaping into his eyes, but the warning was not needed. They all had heard the same—a momentary noise, coming from some point near, though neither of them could exactly place it.

"Out, boys—quick!" hissed Big George. "If there's anybody spyin' round us, smell 'em out, and—"

Opening the door, the three brothers sprang out and ran quickly around the cabin. But no living person was discovered, save a little crow far down the street, who could not possibly have been eavesdropping then.

"'Twas a rat, I reckon," said Red Pepper, as he turned and re-entered the shanty. But he was mistaken. No rat had caused that interruption, as they were to learn, in time.

Little Cassino had his reasons for giving up his office to the Peppers, and was only too glad to accede to the request of Big George, though he concealed his feelings beneath a steady look of unconcern as he left them alone. He resolved to overhear the impending "powwow," and was too adroit to peril his success by a rash or hasty movement. For this reason he passed slowly down the street and entered the "Mint," where his other patient lay. Here he remained long enough to feel sure that the conspirators were thrown off their guard, then ventured out and rapidly approached his shanty from the rear, reaching it unseen. In this he was favored by its being a Sunday. Even the excited attendant upon the discovery of the murdered miner had not proved so lasting but that nearly every digger had settled down to card-playing, and there were no curious eyes to watch his actions.

The cabin, standing upon low ground, had first been built upon four post-holes, straining three or four feet above the surface. Afterward, this open space had been boarded up, to keep out the stray dogs. Near one corner was a hole or hollow in the ground, into which Little Cassino now crawled. He took the precaution, however, to partially fill up the entrance with a few stones lying under the building, and this done, he set himself to listening to the words of the inmates of the room above his head.

He had chosen his time well. Big George was just opening the subject to settle which he had summoned his brethren. Little Cassino listened with a strange eagerness, straining his ears to catch every word. His eyes shone and sparkled like those of a cat, and when Big George mentioned the name of the woman, "Clarry," he fairly held his breath, that not a syllable might escape him. But the speech of Pepper-pot still more deeply excited him, and an involuntary sound escaped his lips—a sound which startled the rogues above as already recorded.

With a breathless curse at his own imprudence, Little Cassino drew back in his corner, and, with ready knife awaited the result of the search. Right well he knew that he must fight for dear life, if discovered. He would receive no mercy at the hands of such men.

"A close shave!" he muttered, as he heard the door closed and barred once more. "I am losing my nerve; but that thought—it *should* be her!"

"Mebbe 'twas a rat," he heard Big George say, "though it didn't sound like one. But now—will you do as I axed, Dick?"

"Yes; I'll do my best," responded Pepper-pot.

"Good! you tell her she won't lose nothin' by carryin' out my wishes. We scratch her back, an' it's no more'n right she should scratch our'n when we stand in need of it. You talk her over, then take a look up the gulch. See that the boys is doing their duty. Tell 'em to work the thing lively, to keep good watch an' settle every cuss as comes 'round pokin' noses whar they don't belong. Tell 'em the time ain't fur off now when the treat I promised 'em'll come. It's wuth workin' fer."

"You kin trust me," impatiently replied Pepper-pot. "What's the use in talkin' so much when I know it all already?"

"Dick's in a monstrous hurry to hev the talk over so he kin git back to his sweetness," grinned Black Pepper.

"At any rate I won't make such an accursed fool of myself over her as you did with—"

"Drop that, Dick!" sharply cried Big George. "Let by-gones be by-gones. As for you, Jack and Eph, your work comes next. I've planned it all out as I lay here, and if you'll only keep your temper and let whisky alone, the job will be an easy one. I only wish I could do it myself, but that cussed whelp! he has settled that—"

"I'll settle him, ef you jest say the word!" chimed in the deep tones of the dwarf. "He shan't hev it to drag over you long. I'll rub him out quicker'n—"

"No you'll not, little un," quickly interposed Big George. "He's a meat and the man who steps atween us had better hev more lives than a cat or he'll lose 'em all. This is for you, too, Jack. You mustn't git into no fuss with him, nor tetch him unless it's to save your own life. You must promise me that," and he waited for the sullen assent of the red-haired giant.

"Thank you, lad; I'll make it up to you sometime. Now fer your part of the work. That'll come to-morrow night, since you say there'll be no show to-night. You an' Eph will be thar. Take a box, an' keep yourselves quiet an' close as though you war mice. You'll watch your chance an' git her to come up to your box—"

"But how? She ain't no o' that sort, as you'd orter know," significantly uttered Red Pepper, grinning.

"She'll come—I'll settle that," impatiently. "I'll give you a note. You'll send it down by one o' the waiters. But mind—don't give it to him when he kin see Eph. She'll ax some questions, an' ef she hearn o' him, she'd scent trouble, right away. You give it to him, as I say. Tell him it's 'portant business; that you're in a hurry. She'll come, never fear."

"Won't she make a fuss when she sees who sent her?"

"You mustn't give her a chance. Hev the curtains down. Stan' close to the door an' grab her as she comes in. Don't let her give a squeal, but mind you treat her as easy as you kin. I don't want her hurt. When you've got her safe, jest muffle her up well an' carry her down stairs. Ef you meet anybody, jest tell 'em she's fainted, drunk, anythin'. Once outside, you'll make for the hills. Eph'll come for the critters, an' I'll meet you wherever you say. You'll strike straight for the Den. Thar you'll put her in Clarry's hands, an' come back here. By that time I'll be fit for the saddle."

"Ef they should find out we did it—"

"I'll send you word in time, then."

The conversation was continued for an hour or more, but nothing further was divulged that requires a place in these pages. Through it all Little Cassino listened, and though no names were mentioned he understood the plot perfectly, and inwardly resolved to frustrate it, if possible.

Then he heard a heavy foot cross the floor and fling open the door. An instant later came a sharp report, mingled with a wild, hoarse yell. Then came a dull, heavy fall upon the floor, shaking the shanty in every timber.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 345.)

A MESSAGE.

BY L. C. GREENWOOD.

Oh, gentle wind! bear thou for me
A message o'er the swelling sea,
To one I love most tenderly!

Take from the music of the wave,
From the echoes of the cave,
From the shells the waters lave,

Voices, my message to impart,
That it falls upon her heart
In love's soft entrancing art;

Whisper to her when alone,
In thy gentlest undertone,
Of him who from her is gone;

Tell her how the moments glide,
Slow and weary, since denied
To be lingering by her side—

How each thought a yearning brings
Of all fond familiar things,
Backward borne on mem'ry's wings—

How he misses her dear face,
Blessed with every tender grace;
How he longs for one fond gaze!

Tell her that he daily longs
For her sweet, enchanting songs—
For the love her bosom throngs.

Bear this, oh, thou gentle wind!
In a manner soft and kind,
To the love he left behind;

Listen to each word she says
In her modest, maiden ways;
She in love for him betrays;

Catch the sparkle of her eye,
Kiss her warm cheek's rose dye;
Nor forget her heart-felt sigh!

Bring an answer back to me,
O'er the water and the lee,
From her I love so tenderly.

Marrying On Time.

BY HENRI MONTCALM.

CONCEIVE, reader, if you can, what would be your feelings if, upon landing at New York from a long European tour, a lawyer should meet you, and, without any preparation at all, tell you that the only near relative you had in the world, though that were but an uncle, had been many months dead, that he had left you a hundred and fifty thousand dollars on condition that you should marry within one year after his decease, and that that year would be up at five o'clock to-morrow afternoon.

It was just so astounding a statement that lawyer Billen poured into Fred Evans' ear as he hurried him along the pier to a carriage at three o'clock on the twenty-second afternoon of a certain June. No wonder the old man was glad to see Fred. He had been sending messages, telegraphic and otherwise, all over the world after him for a whole year, and now it turned out Fred had not received a single one of them. Of course the young man was a little upset by what he heard. And it is not surprising that, feeling as he did, he rejected the lawyer's proposition with scorn. Mr. Billen had not a thought but that even at this eleventh hour the property might be saved. "Why, Fred, boy, you must find somebody and marry her," he said. "It's too bad to lose the homestead and all."

"Who gets it if I don't?" asked Fred.

"Your uncle's grand-niece, Mary Hoyt, of Vermont. Some little, dried-up, stingy old maid, I'll be bound."

"It is too bad; but it can't be helped," responded Fred, apathetically.

"And I had a girl all picked out for you," went on the lawyer, regretfully. "The nicest, prettiest girl you ever set eyes on. I'll leave that to any fellow in Steepbrook."

"Who is she?" inquired Fred, interested in spite of himself.

"Her name is White. She teaches the village school. Come, Fred, go down and see her, at least. We could arrange it all before five to-morrow night, if you only say the word."

"No," said Fred, contrarily. "I'll do no such thing. You don't suppose I'd marry a girl without knowing her twenty-four hours, do you?"—and he lay back in the carriage and would have no more to say on the subject.

But young men are queer creatures sometimes, and at six o'clock the next morning Fred was rapping at Mr. Billen's door.

"What's wanting?" called out the old man, sleepily.

"Did you say that your schoolma'am had red hair?"

"Not by any means. It is a beautiful Auburn."

"Then get up and we'll take the early train for Steepbrook. This is my wedding-day. I'll be hanged if that old maid shall have the money."

But, of course, the train was delayed, and it was all of two o'clock when our noble pair of match-makers reached their destination. Then Fred must have a "good square meal," and it was full three before he announced himself ready to move upon the schoolhouse. "Now," said he, with the complacent air of a man who has just eaten a hearty dinner, "show me your schoolma'am, and if she's passable I swear she shall be Mrs. E., before five o'clock. Do you leave me at the schoolhouse and go straight to Parson Wildbird's and kind of get him ready. I shall probably bring the bride around a little ahead of time, say half-past four. It's well not to be hurried in these matters."

As they approached the schoolhouse, the lawyer's heart sunk within him, but Fred was not one bit abashed by the situation. I suppose one forgets, and his experience with city belles, had encouraged him in the idea that country maidens were always simple and unsophisticated, and he doubted not that his mustache (born in Yucatan, nurtured under the burning sun of the equator, and finally cultivated

and brought to its present perfection in the most elegant capitals of Europe) together with the fortune he had to offer, would draw an eager affirmative from the most eligible schoolmistress in the Connecticut valley.

With some such notions as these in his head, you would have laughed to see how much taken aback he was when he at last stood in the presence of his intellectual intended.

"Miss White, let me introduce Mr. Evans. Mr. Evans is the nephew of old Mr. Jonathan Evans, of Maple Farm. Pray excuse me. I have to go for a while. Mr. Evans would like to visit your charming school. I leave him in your care, Miss White," and with such few remarks, hurriedly and stammeringly delivered, Fred was introduced to his future better half, and Mr. Billen bustled away leaving the two together.

I said that Fred was taken aback at first, and I don't blame him very much, either, for he was wholly unprepared for the delightful little vision in white muslin that now flashed upon him as most bewitching glances as she invited him to be seated and took gently out of his hands the straw hat he was so awkwardly fumbling.

Fred accepted the proffered chair. "I beg pardon," he stammered, blushing painfully and really very badly demoralized, "but I am very much interested in schools and—in schoolma'ams"—here he stopped short and looked helplessly at the clock above the blackboard, quite conscious that he was making a goose of himself, while Miss White mentally remarked that for a young man who had been to college and traveled all over the world, Mr. Evans was decidedly variant. Fred, mustering courage to look at her again, plainly saw in her eyes what was passing in her mind, and this fact, together with the giggling of a class of girls who were curiously regarding him from a platform in the back part of the room, made him a little mad, so that soon he in a great measure recovered his equanimity. Miss White excused herself for going on with the class, but said that since he was so much interested in schools and—so forth, he would perhaps find the exercise entertaining. She would be more at liberty presently.

So Fred, glad to be let alone for awhile, sat there and endured a recitation in geography for something like half an hour, though to tell the truth it didn't require so very much endurance after all, for he sat and looked at Miss White nearly all the time, and probably if he had known her forty years he could not have been more in love with her than he was at the end of that half-hour. And I don't know that I blame him for that very much either. Miss White was really a lady, and at the same time a beautiful and accomplished girl. She carried on the school as though entirely forgetful of her visitor, and it didn't take him five minutes to arrive at the permanent conclusion that she was an angel.

The recitation over, the school was dismissed for recess, and the teacher sat herself down to entertain her visitor. By this time Fred had completely recovered his wonted assurance, and had made up his mind that if he was to succeed in his purpose the best way to do it was by a bold stroke. He evidently had a well-bred, sensible girl to deal with. He would put the matter before her at once just as it was, and appeal to her common sense. He flattered himself that aside from the money, he was not destitute of personal attractions. Miss White knew who he was, that his family was an old one, and himself presumably a gentleman. Altogether he still had little doubt of his success. So he began at once.

"Miss White," he asked, by way of opening the subject, glancing at the clock which now stood at half-past three, "is that supposed to be legal time?"

"It is, according to the law of this school-room. But I don't know just what legal time is."

"You have lived here in Steepbrook quite a while, have you not?"

"Yes; since last fall."

"Then I think you must have heard about my uncle's will?"

"Yes."

"And you know that in order to inherit I must marry within a year after his death?"

"I have heard so."

"The year will end at five o'clock to-night."

Fred said this in italics, but it did not seem to impress her much. She only answered:

"Indeed?"

"Yes," he went on, "and I did not know of his death until yesterday at three."

"Is it possible?"

"And I am yet unmarried."

"Ah!" very indifferently, as though the fact was not of the slightest interest to Miss White.

"Confound her! Is she putting all this on?" thinks Fred. "And doesn't she know what is coming?"

"And what is more," he went bravely on, aloud, "I haven't seen any one I thought I could marry—"

No answer at all.

"That is, I had not—"

Silence.

"Until I saw you." Fred snapped out the final sentence in pure vexation at her indifference.

She looked at him as if she had not quite comprehended him yet, and he proceeded, nothing daunted:

In short, Miss White, I came here to ask you if you would marry me between now and five o'clock."

"Sir!!!"

Fred looked straight at her and met her look of amazement unflinchingly.

"I know it is rather sudden," he said; "but the time was short, and—" he stopped short. Miss White had risen, and was standing before him, her beautiful face all ablaze with indignation, the personification of rage and fury. As soon as she could command herself to speak, she broke forth:

"Sir, you insult me. What do you know of me—what acquaintance have you with me that you should dare to come to me with such a proposition as that? In order to save your paltry inheritance, forsooth, I, who never saw you two hours ago, ought gratefully to marry you because you have been so very kind as to ask me. I pray you excuse me, sir, if I decline. And pray excuse me, also, for going on with the school exercises"—and she snatched up the bell and rung it with a vehemence that not imperfectly expressed the excited indignation that possessed her.

Poor Fred, he did not know just what to do. He felt as though he ought to go, and then he ground his teeth fiercely into the rim of his hat, and swore he wouldn't go, at least not until five o'clock was passed. "A pretty kettle of fish I've made of it," he said to himself. "Come to think of it, it was rather an impudent thing to do. But, by Jove! I didn't have any extra time to think of it in. There's one thing about it, though. I'll marry that girl now, if it takes all summer, and the hundred thousand dollars may go to the—grand-niece in Vermont."

And so he sat there in sullen silence the rest of the hour, and Miss White went on with her classes. Finally the last was heard, the school dismissed, and she turned to her desk just as the clock above the blackboard told the hour of five. The little pink spot on her face grew larger as she met Fred's glance once more. He arose as she came toward the desk.

"Miss White," he said, humbly enough this time, "will you let me ask your pardon? I don't know what possessed me to come here as I did and say what I have. Had I known and respected you then as I do now, I could not have done it."

She looked at him a moment, then held out her little hand frankly. "Very well, Mr. Evans; I pardon you. The circumstances were certainly rather peculiar. Your time is up, I see, and I am really very sorry for you—for I have no doubt?" (this was said a little sarcastically) "that had you known of your uncle's death sooner, the money would have been yours."

"I am thankful I did not know it sooner," says Fred.

She looked at him again with a puzzled air, and he hastened to cover the significance of his remark with a commonplace. Then, finally, she fastened up the schoolhouse, and, with her permission, Fred walked down to the inn with her. But you may depend upon it, he was very careful to avoid the subject of matrimony.

And so the biggest part of the Evans estate was lost to Fred Evans. Lawyer Billen was raving over it, and postponed to the last moment notifying Miss Hoyt, of Eldon, Vermont. But, Fred didn't seem to feel very badly over it, anyway. Indeed, he was so entirely overcome by the fervor of his newly evolved passion for Miss White, that he hadn't the heart to feel blue about anything or anybody else. And it must be confessed that the young lady herself was not so backward in receiving his attentions now that she knew he did not seek her from mercenary motives. In short, she began to like him in spite of herself—a liking which he persistently endeavored to convert into love, until (will you believe it!) one moonlight evening, actually not a month after that afternoon when she had turned upon him so furiously in the schoolroom, he forced her to acknowledge that he had succeeded. And when he had rapturously availed himself of a lover's privilege, and imprinted a first kiss upon her lips, judiciously followed by some hundred or so more, she firmly took hold of his hands, looked into his eyes and told him she had a confession to make.

"Were you aware," she said, "that you didn't yet know even my name?"

"Never mind your name. I know what it will be, presently."

"But, child, you must attend to the realities of life a moment. You have somehow gotten the idea that my name is White. It isn't, it is Hoyt—Mollie Hoyt. The two names sound so much alike when spoken carelessly that they are often mistaken for each other."

"Well, what of that?" asks Fred, still stupidly ignorant of what is coming.

"A good deal of it. I got a letter from home to-day."

"Ah!"

"Yes, and it tells me something I never knew before—that you and I are related."

"Is that so?" says Fred, still uninterested.

"And that I've just fallen heir to a hundred thousand dollars."

"What?" cries Fred, taking his arm from around her waist and looking at her.

"Why, Fred, don't you see—I am the grand-niece! I suspected it a fortnight ago, but I wasn't going to have you proposing to me a second time just for that hundred thousand dollars. You may have it now and welcome, now that I really know that you're in love with me."

"Ah!"

"Yes, and it tells me something I never knew before—that you and I are related."

"Is that so?" says Fred, still uninterested.

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"Ah!"

"Very well; now you can remain in this room, after I leave, and in yonder closet you will find one of my cloaks and a slouch hat—carry them in some way to the prisoner, and when you hear me talking with the sentinel outside the guard-house, both of you leave and come hither; when it gets later, I will walk with you out of the inclosure, passing you by the sentinel, who will think your companion some of the officers seeing you home."

"Oh! Colonel Radcliff, how can I thank you for this kindness?"

"By keeping my part in the affair an inviolate secret; but here, give this to your husband. It is a note from the old Hermit Chief."

Ida turned a shade paler, and held forth her hand for the note, which the officer handed to her.

"Now, Miss Ida, I will leave you. Be brave, be cool, and all will go well."

With a beating heart Ida seized the hat and cloak, and concealing them under her dress, she walked quickly to the guard-house, located in an isolated portion of the stockade inclosure, and guarded by a single sentinel, who, recognizing her, permitted her to enter, for such had been the colonel's orders.

"Well, Stockton, how is your prisoner?" said Colonel Radcliff, approaching the sentinel, a few moments after the maiden had entered the small cabin.

"All right, sir."

"Stockton, what sound is that I hear in the timber?"

"I hear no sound, sir," replied the guard.

"Your ears are dull; come around here out of the wind and listen."

The sentinel at once obeyed, and after listening awhile, said:

"It's from the settlement, sir—the settlers are having a good time, I guess."

"Yes, the sound must come from the settlement. Good-night, Stockton," and Colonel Radcliff walked away, for when he came round in front of the guard-house, he beheld two forms some distance away hurrying toward his quarters.

An hour later, and Colonel Radcliff was walking moodily back from the stockade gate, while Ida and the escaped prisoner were hurrying rapidly toward the settlement.

As he reached his quarters, the relief guard approached, and in their midst was the sentinel, Stockton, his face white and scared.

"What is it, sergeant?"

"The prisoner has escaped, sir."

"Ha! when did this happen?"

"I do not know, sir. I looked in when I relieved the guard just now, and the guard-house was empty," said the sergeant.

"Why, it is not an hour since I was there—was he within then, Stockton?"

"Yes, sir, I heard him speak to the lady, whom I passed in just before you came up, sir."

"By heaven! I have it—I called Stockton from his post for a moment or two, and they doubtless took that opportunity to escape, and a short while since I passed the lady, and a person I supposed to be some escort from the settlement, out of the gate."

"Release Stockton, sergeant, for it is my fault and not his. Send Captain Ashland to me at once."

So saying, Colonel Radcliff entered his quarters, and a few moments after the young captain arrived.

"Ashland, through a blunder of mine, it seems that the prisoner, Captain Ralph, has escaped, and I wish you to take your company and go in pursuit. If you do not find him at the settlement, you had better return, for I do not wish you far away in these times."

The young officer obeyed his orders, and two hours after returned to report that Ida was at home, but that no trace of the prisoner could be found.

Colonel Radcliff appeared to be annoyed at his blunder, which had allowed his prisoner to escape; but, at heart, he rejoiced over the success of his strategy, and the able manner in which Ida had carried it out.

CHAPTER XIX. FRIENDS TO THE FRONT.

When Prairie Pilot stood before his captors, bound hand and foot, and with the hangman's noose around his neck, he at last felt that his doom had come, for he saw no possible means of escape.

Ere he expected, he was suddenly drawn bodily into the air, and all seemed dark before him; but the rope was so twisted that the slipknot got under his chin, and still clinging to life, he pressed his chin with such force upon it, as to prevent its slipping down and choking him.

Still his strength would soon give way, and also he was strangled considerably by the pressure of the rope on the veins of his neck.

Just at this moment he heard the rattle of rifle-shots, and a few loud yells, and, a moment after, his eyes met those of Colonel Radcliff, rushing by.

Then a darkness came over him; there was a roaring in his ears; his strength failed; the noose tightened around his neck, and he knew no more.

When he again opened his eyes, it was some moments before he could collect his senses, and he then saw that he lay with his feet toward a bright fire, and kneeling upon each side of him were two forms—the one a maiden, the other a man, while two more forms stood erect beside the fire.

The glassy film over his eyes soon passed away, and he first recognized Bravo Bob, who was briskly rubbing his neck; then his gaze fell upon the maiden—it was Ione, the Phantom Spy!

With surprise he then turned his eyes upon the men at the fire; one was Yankee Sam, the other Scalp-lock Dave.

With a violent effort he suddenly raised himself from his recumbent position, while Bravo Bob warmly ejaculated, "Thank God!"

"Yes, and you, too, I have to thank—for you have saved my life; now I remember all," said Prairie Pilot, speaking with some difficulty, for his throat pained him severely.

"You must not talk, old fellow, yet awhile; but listen, and I will tell you all," and Bravo Bob offered the scout a flask of liquor, from which he took a good draught, and then silently offered his hand to Sam, Dave and the maiden.

"You see," began Bravo Bob, "I ran upon a heavy trail, and tracking it up, I suddenly met with Yankee and Dave, here, who were on their way to the fort to offer for service in the Indian war."

"Of course we were all glad to meet each other, and I proposed we should follow up the trail together, which we did."

We had not gone far before we ran upon this young lady, whom I at once recognized as the Phantom Spy, and before she could get away, I lassoed her horse, and we made her prisoner."

"Well, we rode on up the river, the trail growing fresher, and just about dark we heard a cheer, and a moment after came upon a sight that made us wild with rage."

"That sight was the best man on these prairies hanging by the neck, and a score of outlaw cutthroats dancing around him."

"We didn't stop to count noses, but let in lively with our rifles and revolvers, and, hang me, if the whole party didn't make tracks."

"While the scare was upon them we dashed in, cut you down, and here you are as good as new, after a short rest."

"Yes, to you I owe my life, my friends; but where are we, Bob?"

"About five miles from the fort—in the Antelope valley."

"You have crossed the river, then, and are in the hill country?"

"Yes; we did not like to camp near your friends, the outlaws."

"A wise conclusion; but, Bob, you must do me another favor."

"Name it, Prairie Pilot."

"Give this maiden into my charge; now I cannot tell you why."

"I will."

"Thank you; now let us camp here for the night; and in the morning, Sam, you and Dave can go on to the fort; but I am going to beg that you will not mention having seen me, my rescue from death, or that you know anything about me."

"I'll be as quiet as a church on week days, you bet; but I'm all-fired glad yer ain't a dead man, I is," said Yankee Sam, while Scalp-lock Dave replied:

"An' so is I. You see, pard, the times is dull now for guides, so we just struck over to the fort to raise Injun hat for the soldiers; but it's a damnation shame that such a man as you is hunted like a dog; but you'll ever find me yer friend."

"I know it, Dave, and some day I hope to prove how I appreciate the friendship of yourself and Sam."

Feeling that they would have a better chance to safely reach the fort in the darkness, Yankee Sam and Scalp-lock Dave expressed their determination to at once set out; so, bidding farewell to Prairie Pilot and his companions, they mounted their horses and rode away.

"Now let us go to my retreat, Bob. Though I could trust Sam and Dave, I could not let them know that secret."

"Can you trust the girl?" asked Bravo Bob, in a whisper.

"With my life. Come."

A few moments more and the trio were on their way, Prairie Pilot having accepted Ione's invitation to a seat with her on Specter, and which the noble animal seemed to care little for.

CHAPTER XX. THE PRAIRIE FIGHT.

THREE weeks passed after the hanging of Prairie Pilot by the outlaws, and the escape of Captain Ralph. Daily matters were becoming more complicated upon the border, for the Indians had taken to the war-path along the whole line, and the settlements were hourly in fear of an attack.

Squadrons of cavalry frequently scouted through the hills and upon the prairies, and often returned with accounts of hard-fought battles with bands of red-skins, and a gloom fell upon all.

With untiring zeal and undaunted courage Colonel Radcliff met every danger and overcame it, and Captain Ashland daily won golden laurels for his fearless attacks against the Indians.

Of the escape of Captain Ralph little was said, after Ida boldly admitted that she had been the means of his escape, taking advantage of the colonel's talk with the sentinel to leave the guard-house.

Since his leaving the fort nothing had been heard of the young outlaw chief; but his band were daily on the war-path against the settlements, led on by the old Hermit Chief, who suddenly seemed to have gained new vigor and health.

Whether Captain Ralph had returned to the stronghold, or given up the life of an outlaw, the scouts and spies could not discover.

Upon comparatively friendly terms with the hostile tribes of Indians, the Hermit Chief could raid along the border with impunity; well knowing that the line of forts were kept busy with their red foes, and with almost savage ferocity he brought ruin upon many a settler's home, and left many a ghastly corpse behind his deadly trail.

The troops commanded by Colonel Radcliff, and the settlers of Blue Water settlement, the Hermit Chief seemed ever to shun, and on several occasions had his whole band fallen back before a small squadron, under the gallant Ashland, until the troops of the fort began to believe that they were invincible, and put on airs accordingly.

At the request of the officers of the fort, and the settlers, Bravo Bob had become chief of scouts, and with Yankee Sam and Scalp-lock Dave for his "bovers" he had organized a most formidable band of bold spirits, that were sudden death to Indians and outlaws whenever they met them.

Frequently Bravo Bob would leave the fort at night, alone, and not return until near daylight.

Where he went none knew, but certain it is that he always had gained some important information in these solitary scouting trips.

Soon rumors began to come that the outlaw band had a deadly foe upon their trail—one who seemed to dog them only by night, for when in their camp they would suddenly be aroused by the ring of a rifle, and the doom of some one of the guards, around the encampment, was sealed.

So frequently had these midnight attacks of their mysterious foe occurred that a number of bandits had fallen, and a nervous dread of sudden death seemed to pervade their ranks.

Who this mysterious enemy could be none knew, and as the Indians also had heard his rifle's death-knell, and felt his vengeance, a superstitious horror seemed to fall upon red-skin and outlaw alike.

From settlement to settlement, from fort to fort, flew the news of his deadly hunt for human game, until around the mess-tables, at the hearth-stone and in the camp his deeds were the subject of conversation and all wondered whom the terrible slayer could be.

Many believed him to be the Prairie Pilot, but as no one could tell aught of that famous scout, since the night he exposed Captain Ralph, it was doubted by numbers, for he was supposed to have been killed.

Upon the subject of the mysterious avenger there were four persons who usually kept silent, and seldom expressed an opinion.

These four were Ruth Radcliff, Bravo Bob, Yankee Sam and Scalp-lock Dave—a quartette who, if they had a secret, knew well how to keep it.

Early in the month of September a horseman was seen coming across the prairie at full speed, a hundred Indians at his back, and endeavoring to see who could gain the honor of raising his hair.

Out from the fort dashed Bravo Bob and his score of scouts, hunters and guides, and the In-

dians were checked by a well-aimed volley of rifle-bullets.

While the horseman continued on toward the fort, Bravo Bob went into line of battle and commenced an open prairie fight with the redskins, and being supported by a squadron of troops, under the gallant Ashland, an animated combat at once began.

Though the Indians put on a bold front and their chief handled them well, they were soon put to flight, and with wild yells the victorious whites followed them, to return an hour after with many a glory scalp as a war-trophy.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 342.)

THE WIFE'S BECAUSE.

BY ADELAIDE PROCTOR.

It is not because your heart is mine—mine only—mine alone:

It is not because you chose me, weak and lonely, For your own;

Not because the earth is fairer, and the skies Spread above you

Are more radiant for the shining of your eyes, That I love you!

It is not because the world's perplexing meaning Grows more clear,

And the paraps of heaven, with angels leaning, And Nature sings of praise with all her voices

Since yours spoke, Since with my silent heart that now rejoices, Love awake!

Nay, not even because your hand holds heart and life, At your will,

Soothing, hushing all its discord, making strife Teaching Trust to fold her wings, nor ever roam

From her nest; Teaching Love that her secret, safest rest Must be rest.

But because this human love, though true and sweet,

Yours and mine—Has been sent by Love more tender, more complete,

More divine, That it leads our hearts to rest at last in heaven, Far above you

Do I take thee as a gift that God has given— And I love you!

Tales of the Indies.

SMOKY JACK'S.

BY YAM.

JIMMIE HOWARTH was full of the devil, and had often proposed that we should play "native" and go up to the Hindoo village of Kidnapore.

This was our second voyage, and altogether we had spent nine months in the island, learning in that time considerable of the language, or, as my chum called it, the "lingo."

Jimmie was signal midshipman, and I was senior; from our first meeting we had struck up an acquaintance which had daily ripened into friendship, and at the time of which I am writing we were known as the "inseparables."

We were both wild, reckless, devil-may-care boys of seventeen, had chosen the profession from a spirit of daring and love of adventure.

Many were the scrapes and hair-breadth escapes we had, and we were already known as two of the most mischievous middleies in port.

"What do you say, old man; shall we risk it?"

"I am with you, every time, but we'll have to wait till it is dark, and in the meantime I'll see the 'humbat' and dingy wallers,' and procure a couple of 'coopers' and some paint and jewelry."

We had been on so many expeditions of a like nature that some restrictions had been placed upon our visits ashore, and we now determined not to breathe a word of our intended escapade.

I obtained the necessities, and we waited patiently until dark; we had previously arranged with "Boxo," the ship's attendant boatman when in port, to take us off at seven o'clock; but as the time approached we found he did not come off.

"Ho-o-o-o-o, Boxo," sung out Jimmie.

"Ay, sahib!" returned he, from the shore.

"Um canara jaggar, jeldie carow!" (I go ashore; be quick)

"Atheer, atheer," (all right), he replied, pulling off.

"Now, Ned, old man, bring along your wardrobe," said Jim.

I had rolled the linen, paint and armlets in a canvas-bag. We had already stained our bodies a copper color, and had squeezed a pair of anklets over our feet, which were covered by the linen duck pants we wore.

When Boxo came alongside we hurried to the gangway, and endeavored to steal down unperceived, but the quartermaster had received orders to allow no one ashore that night, and ordered us back on deck.

"Ducera borda," I whispered to Boxo. ("The other side.")

We returned on deck and pretended to retire to our cabin, but stole round to the port bow, and slid down the stock of the anchor, then upon the fluke, and so dropped into the dingy which was in waiting.

After rewarding Boxo and his crew of three "Lascars," we told them to put us ashore about a mile from Kidnapore, in the meantime doing nothing to arouse the suspicion of our boatmen.

The tide was out, and the boat could not get right in to the shore, so two of the crew jumped into the mud and I carried Jimmie ashore, then returned for me.

I threw one leg over the shoulder of each, and placed one arm around the neck of each of my bearers; we waded slowly and cautiously for about twenty yards, when the fellow on my left began to sink deeper and deeper into the mire. I clung to the one on my right, but my weight overbalanced him, and over we both went.

I stretched out my arms and legs, spread-eagle like, and waited for my carriers to extricate themselves.

The one who first gave way was now up to his waist, and making the most frantic efforts to keep up.

I told his companion to go to his rescue, and then to take me ashore.

After considerable pulling, hauling and dragging our unfortunate attendant was relieved from his perilous position, and taking both hands scraped the thick cakes of mud from his person and limbs.

Jimmie and myself were convulsed with laughter at the ludicrous figure we all cut, but especially at the woebegone expression of the fellow who found himself helplessly stuck in the mire.

As soon as we reached the shore we went to a dilapidated and abandoned hut near by, where we took off our pantaloons and shirts (our only clothing when we left the ship), and having colored our faces and hands the color of our bodies, we proceeded to grind round our loins the native "coopers."

After a few finishing touches of tattoo in red and white paint to the face and arms, and hav-

ing put on our tawdry bracelets and armlets, we proceeded toward the village.

We were now dressed as the poorer class of natives, and our "get-up" was quite creditable as such. We only required a couple of sun umbrellas and fans to complete our outfit and make us perfect; these we obtained at the first "bazaar" we came to.

"Hurrah! now for 'Smoky Jack's,'" cried Jimmie.

"Choppeau, tune bat bolta," (silence; speak the lingo), I replied, for I was well aware that we should have to use great caution, and speak only in Bengalee or Hindostanee, as being once discovered, we should be probably handled without gloves.

We decided to hear, see, but say nothing or next to nothing, and so strode along with the long, swinging gait of indifference so peculiar to these people.

After crossing Kidnapore bridge we perceived a dim light in the distance, which we calculated from its bearings to be the native groshop of the notorious "Smoky Jack," whose father was hung a few years ago for the murder of an English officer.

As we approached we heard sounds of revelry issuing from the hut, and those in its immediate vicinity.

Drunken Hindoos, singing, laughing and beating the tom-tom, dogs barking, and women dancing and screaming.

We entered the inclosure to Smoky Jack's, formed by bamboos to represent a primitive fence, and knocked twice at the door.

"Ker-munta?" asked a voice ("what want you?")

In reply we requested them to open to us, as we desired some "arak" and "juggery," or native smoking mixture.

As we entered I cautioned Jimmie to be careful of the beastly liquor of which the natives are so fond, and suggested that we would leave immediately they became suspicious.

"Cut and run, do you mean?"

"If necessary," I rejoined.

We took a squatting position on the hard earth floor and looked boldly around, acknowledging the various "Salaams" in silence.

Two boys ran up and fanned us incessantly, as I ordered segars and arak for ourselves and the "baboo," or merchant, in whose place we were.

Smoky Jack was a big, fat, lazy scoundrel, about fifty years of age, weighing about two hundred pounds, and with a very dissipated and villainous face, across which was a huge scar, acquired during the Indian mutiny.

There were, perhaps, fifteen natives in the hut, who were jabbering away at the rate of knots; some standing, others squatting upon their haunches, lazily passing round a large "hubblebubble" filled with a narcotic.

Each man would slowly inhale the smoke twice or three times, and then pass it to his neighbor. This continued with great solemnity and silence (among the smokers).

It was truly ludicrous to observe the importance with which this ceremony was performed.

As the pipe came its round, with the sun, it was handed to Jimmie, who laid down his segar and deliberately smoked for about half a minute, then, wiping the stem, solemnly handed it to me.

It was beastly stuff, I knew, but it was necessary to act out the full programme, so I accepted the situation and made a very meditative face, drew a full breath, closed my eyes, and smoked in the most approved manner.

I had particularly warned my companion against the smoking decoctions and liquors, but I saw that he was somewhat excited, and I could not safely communicate with him, and I was in fear he would turn the tables on us. He arose and went up to Baboo Smoky Jack, and ordered drinks around. I determined to throw mine over my shoulder, and endeavored to advise him to pursue a similar course, but I could not get an opportunity, so I prepared for the worst.

After the second drink, and the odor emanating from the narcotic weed, he began to be noisy and reckless, quarreled with a "pawne-waller" (water-carrier), and finally broke out in some very strange oaths, part English and part Bengalee.

All eyes were now turned upon us, and the crisis appeared to have arrived.

I now spoke loudly, and observed that my friend had mixed much with Englishmen, and picked up a good many words used by them; that he was a great hater of the English and "Molican man," and that he really did not mean to offer an insult to any there.

It was no use, however. Although I could speak Bengalee pretty well, yet I could not articulate as fast and glibly as an excited native, and, finally losing my temper, I sprang to the side of my shipmate and defied them.

We fought our way to the door, and started on a run for the ship. By this time at least thirty natives were at our heels, and we knew it was no use for two to stand and fight against such great odds.

We ran swiftly over Kidnapore bridge, closely followed by the whole village. Dogs barked, children yelled, women screamed, and the whole place was aroused.

We once more turned and showed fight, but had again to beat a precipitate retreat, and narrowly escaped paying dearly for our foolish love of adventure.

I was closely pursued by a tall, athletic fellow, who was a score of yards ahead of his comrades, and within a few feet of me. In his hand he carried a long bamboo, which he intended to use as a lance.

I lost no time, after discovering his close proximity to me, but held steadily on my way, knowing that so long as I could hear his regular respiration I should be in no danger of the lance.

I listened for the first indication of a longer breath than usual, knowing that at that moment he would poise and throw his bamboo.

I dared not look back. On, on, I flew.

"Ugh!"

I leaped high in the air as the bamboo came rushing through the air, but not high enough. He had aimed for my back, but it shot between my legs, and threw me headlong with violence to the earth.

I rolled over and over. And he stumbled and fell in trying to avoid me.

I called to Jimmie for assistance, and sprang to my feet at the moment that my antagonist gained his.

Sizing in my left hand my knife, I grasped the bamboo with my right, then ran full tilt at the body of my foe. The point struck and entered his bowels, as he uttered the most fearful yells.

I dispatched him with my knife and then ran to the assistance of my shipmate, who was engaged with a new arrival. We made very short work of him, and then struck into the jungle to evade the approaching pursuers.

We soon lay down exhausted and faint, but dared not sleep on account of reptiles and wild beasts.

In two hours we emerged, and started once more for the vessel.

On our way down we perceived what we supposed to be our pursuers squatting in a circle in a clearing. We started on a run again, not caring to come to another encounter. But what was our surprise and disgust to see our supposed foes scamper away in the jungle. We had been fooled by jackalls.

Thus ended our excursion to "Smoky Jack's."

Base-Ball.

BY HENRY CHADWICK.

THE PROFESSIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP.

THE success of the Chicago club in winning the pennant this season is a triumph for honest play, good training and discipline, over "crooked" work and no training whatever. For the first time since Chicago had a professional team in the field, that city has had a reliable team to represent her in the championship arena, and the result is that the directors of the club have been rewarded with the winning of the honors for their city. There has been but one drawback and that is the success of the rival club of St. Louis in winning a majority of the games of the two clubs together. The struggle for second place—at the present time of writing, October 9th—is still pending, the chances being in favor of Hartford, inasmuch as up to October 9th the record stood at thirty-one to thirty only in favor of St. Louis, with the latter with but one more game to play, while Hartford has four, two of which are with Cincinnati and two with Boston. Granting that St. Louis wins the Cincinnati match, and Hartford does the same, that will make their scores a tie, thirty-two to thirty-two, and then Hartford will have but one game to win of their two with Boston, to earn second place.

The record of all the games played up to October 9th, is as follows, the names being given in the order of won games:

| Clubs. | Chicago. | Hartford. | Boston. | St. Louis. | Material. | Cincinnati. | Games won. | Games dr'n. | Games lost. | Games tied. | Games played. |
|-------------|----------|-----------|---------|------------|-----------|-------------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| Chicago | 14 | 19 | 21 | 29 | 36 | 34 | 45 | 252 | 6 | 610 | |
| Hartford | 6 | 4 | 6 | 9 | 9 | 7 | 10 | 52 | 0 | 65 | |
| Boston | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 45 | 0 | 64 | |
| St. Louis | 1 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 42 | 1 | 66 | |
| Material | 1 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 42 | 1 | 66 | |
| Cincinnati | 1 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 42 | 1 | 66 | |
| Games lost. | 14 | 19 | 21 | 29 | 36 | 34 | 45 | 252 | 6 | 610 | |

THE REVELATION.

BY JOHN GOSSIP.

An hour of gold came down a year ago,
Deep-fraught with blessings; but I did not know
It was a golden hour that blest me so.

A week—nay, less—and then another came;
An hour it was, I knew; but that another name
It bore, knew not—and yet it was the same!

Then, later still, a moment came to me
In gold apparel, which I could not see—
Perhaps because it slipped away so suddenly.

To-day a second, clad in cloth of gold,
Dropped from the sky into the Father's fold;
And, oh! the light which from that second rolled!

Now is that hour of gold returned to me;
Now all the gold in all the hours I see,
For I with golden hours am blest eternally!

Great Adventurers.

THE CABOTS,

The Discoverers of North America.

BY DR. LOUIS LEGRAND.

THESE navigators—father and sons—though sailing under an English flag as English subjects—were Italians. John, the father (Giovanni Cabotto), was a Venetian merchant, whose successes in trade and adventure had assured him a competence. He settled in Bristol, England, where Sebastian, the third son, was born, 1477. Like the elder Cabot (or Cabotto) he had a great fondness for the sea, and, together with his two elder brothers, was instructed, as were all youths of good family, designed for a commercial and trading life, in geography, astronomy and mathematics—in which he became proficient. At the age of nineteen, when Europe was all ablaze with the excitement of discovery, King Henry VII. of England granted the Cabots—father and sons—a patent for the discovery and conquest of unknown lands. The merchant equipped, at his own expense, a small vessel—the *Mathew*—and on the 24th of June, 1497, in this craft, came upon the coast of our continent in the vicinity of Labrador (about lat. 56°) and explored enough along the ocean line of his "*Prima Via*" to ascertain that he was, in reality, called upon to map the eastern coast of a new world. This was the first discovery of the Western world, ante-dating Columbus' first sight of the mainland more than a year. And this priority is not a matter of question: to the Cabots, in their little vessel, belongs the honor of having first lifted the veil of ages from the face of the virgin continent.

The smallness of his outfit for the purposes of exploration induced his early return to England, bearing three of the natives of Newfoundland back with him.*

Henry, as a personal compliment, puts down in his items of expense—"To him that found the new isle, £10"—showing that the king regarded the region visited as an "isle"—although a large one, still an isle, for the belief was fixed that all the lands beyond the western sea were but the outlying barriers to the "farther Ind," the remote eastern coast of Asia.

To further Cabot's designs Henry (Feb. 24, 1498) granted "John Cabotto" permission to take six ships, in any haven of the realm, of the burden of 200 tons and under, "to convey and lede to the Londe and Isles of late founde, by the said John, in our name and by our commandment," etc. With this fleet John and Sebastian sailed along the coast from Newfoundland down to Chesapeake Bay and returned the same year (1498) to report the greatness of the land, but that it was filled with very ferocious beasts and savages with no signs of civilization. The year following a third adventure was made, by which Sebastian explored the coast-line down to the Gulf of Mexico, but of this and the previous voyage no written record whatever exists.

This remarkable indifference to Cabot's discoveries is incomprehensible. Sebastian preserved all his logs, notes, soundings and records, but they all mysteriously disappeared a few years later, and have never been recovered, so that England, in spite of her priority of discovery and visitation, had afterward to admit both the French and the Spaniards to possession of the new domain. Cartier, under protection of Francis I. of France, sailed over Cabot's first route and discovered the Gulf and River St. Lawrence, but not until 1534—thirty-seven years after Cabot had made landings along the coast; and by this discovery of Cartier France laid claim to Canada; and eventually to all the country from Canada to Louisiana because Joliet and Marquette had explored the Mississippi river. The Spaniards under Ponce de Leon discovered Florida not until 1512, when that nation laid claim to all the Southern region of what are now our Southern or Gulf States, and through which De Soto wandered in his hapless expedition (1539-43). The failure to print or publicly proclaim the Cabots' discoveries and explorations, in 1497-98-99, lost to Great Britain the right of domain on the north and south, confined her to "New England" and "Virginia," and entailed on her fierce wars to dispossess her rivals.

Cabot the elder having died after his return from the second voyage, Sebastian, finding his adopted country both indifferent and ungrateful, seems to have retired from the public, for we find no account of his work for the succeeding twelve years of his life. Henry VII. dying, A. D. 1512, Cabot was sent for by the enterprising Ferdinand of Spain, and, in September of that year, entered his services as captain, receiving a liberal salary. He gave his attention to maritime matters, with which he was so conversant, and it is surmised that he bore away with him all his records of voyages, placing them in the Spanish naval establishment.

That he was highly regarded is evident, for we find him (A. D. 1515) a member of the important and dignified "Council of the Indies." He was assigned to the conduct of a powerful expedition of discovery ordered by Ferdinand, A. D. 1515, whose purpose, it is surmised, was to again run down the coast line from Newfoundland to the Gulf, and to take possession of the country in the name of the King of Spain. But, Ferdinand dying in the beginning of 1516, the whole enterprise was suspended, and ere long abandoned, for the new emperor, Charles V., of Austria—heir to three thrones—did not visit Spain to assume the crown for some time thereafter, and the Spanish court, we are told, "became the scene of shameful intrigue," in which Cabot, being regarded as a *foraigner*, and *Englishman*, suffered the persecutions of Fonseca—the old enemy of Columbus, another "foraigner." Evidently Fonseca was a first-class fool.

Cabot wisely returned to England, where the great if not gracious Henry VIII. was then making England's power and glory recognized, in a very authoritative way. In the year 1516 Henry dispatched Cabot, in joint command with Sir Thomas Peste, to discover a north-west passage to India—the first of all that long list of searchers which embraces many a glorious name. The expedition reached north latitude 67½°, but, after partially exploring Hudson's Bay, returned, owing to the gross insubordination of the crew and Sir Thomas' incapacity for command. Of this voyage no official records exist!

Charles V., having come to Spain, sent for Cabot, and made him pilot-major of the kingdom—the post held by Vespucci—whose duties consisted in supervising all plans for voyage and discovery, to indicate sea routes, etc., etc., and to fill out the maps for the records and logs of returning ships. The Pope of Rome in those days having arrogated and been conceded the power to apportion each nation its portion of the new domains, a discordance between Spain and Portugal arose as to the right of domain in the Moluccas. This quarrel assumed such proportions that a solemn conference was ordered, of eminent men chosen by each country. Cabot was first on the list. The conference sat at Badajoz, in April and May, 1524, and decided that the Spice Islands (the Moluccas) were within the Spanish division of the world. As Portugal, up to this time, had almost maintained a complete monopoly of the trade in spices, this decision opened the way to Spanish possession, and a strong company was formed at Seville to open the trade there.

Of this enterprise Cabot was solicited to take command, and did so, but, with usual Spanish perversity, three men were assigned to the successorship in his command—all of whom were his personal enemies. The expedition sailed April, 1526, proposing to reach the Moluccas by a voyage round the southern end of the American continent, instead of the usual course of the Portuguese ships, by way of Cape of Good Hope. A mutiny occurring off the coast of Brazil, fomented by the three officers named, Cabot was forced to put them ashore, and this so diverted his plans as to induce him to go no further than Brazil.

He therefore explored the great river, La Plata, which he named from the Indians wearing breast-plates of gold, and proceeded to establish posts at several points. A vessel was dispatched to Spain to obtain war and help from Charles, for settlement and colonization, which the emperor readily granted, and thus relieved the merchants of their share in the enterprise.

An expedition under Diego Garcia having followed, in 1527, with authority from the emperor to explore and possess the country, Cabot had to defer to his authority, but the followers of Garcia, left behind when he again sailed away, committed such atrocities against the peaceable but resentful Indians (the Guarani), that the savages rose in great fury, and Cabot only saved his life and those of his men by sailing away to sea—reaching Spain in 1531. He resumed his old post of major pilot, making occasional voyages for observation and exploration of which but a mere mention exists.

In 1548 he returned to England, at the solicitation of Somerset, protector to the young king (Edward VI.), and Edward was so pleased with the great navigator's intelligence and agreeable conversation, that he bestowed on him a liberal pension, and made him grand pilot of England. It was by his advice and direction that an English company opened a trade with Russia, by way of the Baltic and the north seas, which proved a very valuable enterprise, and for whose excellent arrangements and policy Cabot was credited. The hope had been to penetrate, by the north sea, around the north of Asia, and thus find a north-east passage to India; but, failing in this, the merchants immensely profited by commerce with northern Europe and Asia. He was, in fact, governor of the Russian company, and active in all its affairs.

The death of Edward and accession of Mary again changed the position and fortunes of the now venerable navigator. His pension and office were shared by one Worthington, of whom nothing is known. This person became possessed of all Cabot's exceedingly valuable store of maps, charts and records, and as these most interesting and important documents have wholly disappeared, it is inferred that this Worthington, acting on Mary's suggestion, had them all given to her husband, Philip of Spain—whom she loved with strange idolatry, and for whose interests she ever was solicitous.

Cabot, now venerable in years, seems to have withdrawn, after his pension was reduced, in 1557, from all public service, and so little attention was accorded him that the date and circumstances of his death are not known, but supposed to have been in the year 1557—being then eighty years old—and of the decrepitude of age.

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Brave Barbara:

FIRST LOVE OR NO LOVE.

A STORY OF A WAYWARD HEART.

BY CORINNE CUSHMAN,

AUTHOR OF "BLACK EYES AND BLUE," ETC.

CHAPTER XVII.

A MISTAKE AND A TEMPTATION.

THERE was a good deal of excitement in the neighborhood of Dunleath Castle about the approaching marriage of the earl.

The tenantry, as usual, were pleased with the prospect of "cakes and ale," the villagers discussed the affair with all the gusto of ignorance—knowing nothing, they therefore talked the more; while the few gentry in the neighborhood indulged in polite curiosity, mentioning the matter to each other over their visitables and at their dinners. The countess was not on visiting terms with any of these people, who had some claims to an acquaintance, and they, therefore, detested her accordingly. She made the health of her son an excuse; but her own haughty and imperious temper was well understood. There were strange and absurd stories afloat, as to the peculiar nature of the earl's infirmities—stories even worse than the melancholy truth, and which would have curdled the proud blood of his mother in her veins could she have heard them. It was pretty generally known that there was to be no public ceremony at the time of the marriage; that, should it take place in the cathedral, no strangers would be admitted to it; and that immediately after the wedding the young married pair would start for the Continent, to spend the winter in Nice for the benefit of the bridegroom's health.

The cathedral stood about midway between the castle and the village, two miles from each. It was a picturesque point in the landscape; its great square gray tower, waving with ivy, standing up against the sky and visible from every direction. Near at hand, it was even more interesting. A part of the building was

very old; but the earls of Dunleath had always made it a point to keep it in good repair, and to add to it, from time to time, as their fancies prompted. It was especially rich in "storied windows;" the present countess had presented the last, and it was one of the finest in England. A churchyard lay behind the cathedral; an ancient churchyard, where the yews had stood, some of them, for two hundred years, and many tombs and headstones were sunken quite out of sight. Noble elms, standing about the great church, had essayed in vain to reach as high as the ivy, which swung from the solid towers as carelessly as the painted cherubs swung from the lofty ceiling within.

In summer there were almost always people hovering about the cathedral and wandering through the churchyard; tourists, artists and the inhabitants of the country, who made it the terminus of their walks and drives. But in winter, except on Sabbaths and holy days, it was deserted enough.

One crisp afternoon, early in December, Delorme Dunleath came walking briskly along from the direction of the castle.

Since that interview with Lady Alice in the summer-house which Mrs. Courtenay had overheard, he had been away, and had only just returned, the previous day, to Dunleath.

He had plenty to think of, as he strode along, looking with observant eyes at the brown earth, glittering with frost, the pale-blue sky, the gray-green of the sea-line against the horizon, the red leaves here and there, like the wing of some tropical bird, shining out of the dark green of the ivy on the tower.

He had not found the atmosphere of the castle improved during his fortnight's absence. Lord Ross went about with a sinister smile; the countess appeared nervous and harassed; his cousin was full of whims and humors; Lady Alice, white as the ghost of a lily, silent, sad, depressed. No uninformed intruder could possibly have supposed that a wedding—a wedding of youth, beauty, rank—was so soon to take place in that magnificent home. Delorme was himself oppressed by the consciousness of what he had promised Lady Alice to do. He felt that it was a wicked thing for this helpless girl to be forced into the arms of his sickly cousin; but he did not like the idea of playing traitor to that cousin, whom he pitied sincerely, if he did not love him. He wished himself well out of the business. Sometimes he wished himself well out of the world. "Nothing ever went right with him," he said to himself, bitterly.

On this particular day a rumor had come to the castle that one of the steamers running between New York and Liverpool had been destroyed by fire, and that the news had been brought to Dunleath by two rescued passengers, brought into port by the bark Mary Ann, which came in that morning; that these passengers were Americans—a young lady and a young gentleman—and that that the latter had already hurried on to London, leaving the lady at the village inn.

"It is a case which demands our kind services, aunt," said Delorme, at the lunch-table. "I think I will walk over to the village and offer any kindness which may be in my power."

"Do you prefer walking, Delorme?"

"Yes, aunt, thank you."

"You can call upon my purse, freely, Delorme; but you know I am peculiar about inviting strangers into my house."

"Oh, certainly, aunt. I dare say the lady can be made comfortable at the inn. But she will like to feel that there are those at hand ready to serve her; and she may need money, clothing, advice."

"And then our young friend takes a deep interest in anything American," observed Lord Ross, with a meaning smile.

Delorme blushed, and was angry at himself for doing it.

"I admire a great many persons whom I met in the United States," he said, nastily. "I do feel an interest in that people, particularly; though I trust both you and I, aunt, would extend a friendly hand to any one so unfortunate as this poor young lady seems to have been."

Certainly, there was not the faintest clairvoyant impression on the young man's mind to tell him who this young lady was. Only, his heart beat a little faster at the very thought that she was the countrywoman of that beautiful girl who had driven him from her with such scorn—such words of fiery contempt.

He was thinking of Barbara as he went toward the village on his errand; his mind and his heart were full of her as he approached the old cathedral, about which clustered the homes of the dead, the gleaming marbles, the rusty yews, the tall, drooping elms. He did not like this venerable building.

It had, for him, one miserable association, stronger than any other, which lived down, and thrust down imperiously, all the gentle, sacred, pleasant feelings and memories which should have haunted it for him.

In this old church, on one black day of his early youth, he had been married.

He could never forget that when he looked at it.

He recalled it, this day, all the more vividly, because his heart was so full of Barbara Rensselaer. Almost unconsciously his feet turned aside from the frosty brown highway and strayed into the churchyard, green and dark with thick-growing evergreens, yew and cedar, pine and box, amid the clusters of whose somber green shone out white headstones, and over which fell the vast shadow of the church itself, thrown by the westerling sunbeams.

His steps lingered, his head drooped; deeply occupied by his own reveries, he wandered here and there, sometimes, without being conscious of it, reading the half-illegible, quaint inscription on some mossy stone, but always thinking of Barbara—and of that other woman who had wrecked his life.

His footsteps made no noise on the grassy paths as he rambled on to the rear of the ancient pile; he saw no one, and thought himself quite alone, until he heard a low murmur of voices behind a cluster of evergreens in a most secluded portion of the ground. He would immediately have gone away had not one of the speakers in some excitement raised her voice, and a tone in it fell on his ear with a familiar cadence which brought a dark frown to his face.

"You here, serpent!" he muttered to himself.

Then her companion answered her in a voice very low, very soft, but thunder could not have rolled more unexpectedly upon the intruder's ears; the loudest artillery of heaven could not have shaken him as those soft whispers shook him.

Could his senses be deceiving him?

He crept cautiously, making a wide circuit, until he approached the concealed speakers from a point which betrayed them to him, while he was hidden from their observation by intervening thickets of box. A great glow followed by a great chill, flashed over him.

There, on a low, gray tomb, sat Barbara! Barbara, changed more than he could have

thought a few weeks could have changed her. A plain straw hat, which she had borrowed from the landlady of the inn, lay at her feet. Her beautiful, bright, graceful head was bare. How well he remembered that spirited movement she had with that proud little head. He did not notice that her hair was short. He was blind, dizzy with the sudden sight of her, sitting there in that English graveyard! Yet, even in his reeling first vision of her, he realized that she was paler, thinner—that her glorious face had a worn, thoughtful look.

Those sweet, unfathomable eyes—eyes, the first sight of which sent the blood whirling in mad dancing circles through his brain—were now fixed sadly on the far-away pink flush of the western sky, as she listened to the low, rapid accents of her companion.

Delorme caught at the branches of a larch until his brain steadied itself.

How strange, how horribly queer and unaccountable, to see those two women together! She, the serpent, the impure, the wicked one, whom he had once called wife, with this pure, this innocent girl, who had promised to be his wife only to drive him from her when she learned of the chain which had once bound him to the other.

To find these two together, and in this place, was, indeed, passing strange! Delorme was so bewildered that he never thought of associating Barbara with the shipwrecked young lady at the inn. Their presence in this spot—together—and his own beside them, appeared to him in the light of something supernatural.

While he watched their unable to make up his mind whether to advance or retire, they arose and went away. He followed after them at a safe distance, and saw them take the direction of the village. He continued to follow them and to hold them in view until they entered the village inn. Then, and not until then, it occurred to him that Barbara must be the young lady whom the Mary Ann had brought into port!

Was it his place to offer his services to her? Should he again expose himself to her bitter scorn? His pride rebelled; but, oh, his heart yearned after her, and drew his feet onward irresistibly, while he trembled to think of the danger she had suffered, and could have wept for pity of her sufferings—for he could see that she had suffered. What was he to do? He stood, irresolutely, at last, on the worn stone floor of the hall of the ancient inn. The obsequious landlady rushed out of the adjoining bar to pay court to a Dunleath. Delorme inquired into the particulars of the loss of the steamer, and the name of the rescued lady.

"Here is her name, sir, as the young gentleman as rescued her gave it to me on a bit of paper."

Delorme looked and read the beloved name. "She was an acquaintance of mine in New York," declared the young man, betraying a little of his inward agitation; "you will not be the loser, landlady, by any attentions you may show to the young lady. Take up my card, please, and bring me word if she will see me."

Delorme walked up and down with hasty strides while the landlady went on his errand; the five minutes were hours, until the messenger returned, and with some embarrassment at refusing an earl's cousin, stammered out that the young lady did not feel equal to receiving any one.

Now, as Delorme had just seen that she could walk two miles, he understood that Barbara did not intend their acquaintance should be renewed. The haughty blood mounted to his brow, he turned on his heel and left the inn; there was nothing for him to do but to leave her—and in such company!—and return to the castle. He made short work of the four miles' tramp. Half-blind, half-dead, unconscious of the long strides, which made those who passed him on the way believe that he was walking "on time," he realized nothing outside of his own disturbed mind, until, coming into an avenue of limes which led from a private gate through a retired part of the castle grounds, the soft voice of Lady Alice arrested him. She had come out to meet him, and he had nearly passed her without seeing her. Then he stopped short and stared at her, hardly realizing who it was, so suddenly had she called his thoughts from what so completely absorbed them.

"How strangely you look at me! Are you displeased because I came out in the hopes of meeting you?" she timidly asked, the ready tears welling into her large, violet eyes. "Indeed, indeed, Delorme, it is killing me to live in that house! Can you not see that it is killing me?" she pleaded, piteously.

He looked at her more narrowly, trying to forget his own sorrows, for he was generous and helpful by nature. He saw that Lady Alice was as white as a snow-drop; that she trembled as she stood before him, and that the anxious, frightened expression of those great blue eyes was painful to see.

"Is it anything new?" he asked, kindly.

"No, no, no—nothing new, Delorme. But it is killing me all the same. I never was born to act the hypocrite, yet I have to do it there—under my father's gaze—under the suspicious eyes of the countess—the jealous, fiery eyes of Herbert! I have to meet all those searching looks, and act my part as if I liked Herbert. I have to accept the countess' splendid gifts. I have, lowering her voice to a whisper, 'to allow Herbert to treat me as his promised wife. And I tell you, Mr. Dunleath—you may not realize it, but it is so—I tell you that his presence blights me, the smile in his eye, the touch of his hand, is like frost upon a flower. I am dying under it. I can never express to you the deep, the hideous, the growing repulsion that I feel toward your cousin. I can only explain it on the ground that by trying to force me to love him they have made me hate him. For the heart will not be forced. It rebels. It will have its own way,' she added, very softly, the hurry and passion of her voice dying down into a tender whisper as she raised a troubled, eloquent look to the eyes of the man who stood kindly listening.

"Yes—the heart is a stubborn leader," replied Delorme, from the depths of his own experience.

"And I am so afraid that by some betrayal of our plans, or failure to carry them out, I shall yet be forced to be his wife. That fear haunts me all the time—prevents my sleeping—wears on me, until those three weeks of suspense still left, seem to me like so many interminable years."

"I did not realize that you were suffering so much, my poor little Alice. I am afraid I have been too deeply absorbed in my own lesser troubles. I must give you more attention. You must not make yourself miserable, fretting over the possible failure of our plans. They shall not fail. I will see to that. You can trust your aunt to me, can you not?"

"Entirely," she answered, her soulful eyes betraying more than they ought of her absolute faith and devotion.

"Then, cease trembling. Sleep at night. Bear the daytime bravely. I promise to help you through, unless some fatal misfortune

befalls me meantime. Compose yourself, my foolish, trembling child, and depend on me."

He offered her his arm, which she clung to with childish dependence, and they walked back and forth on the avenue, hidden from the castle windows by the limes, while he waited for her to recover her composure before returning to the house.

In two minutes he had become unconscious that she was on his arm, walking faster and faster under the fierce impulse of his memories, until his poor little companion was on the run, at length exclaiming, breathlessly:

"Why do you hurry so? What's the matter with you?"

"You poor child!" he exclaimed, looking down at her, gently. "I beg a thousand pardons. How your breath flutters! I met some one this afternoon, the sight of whom agitated me deeply; and I have been thinking of her—so you must forgive me. Little Alice, yours is a womanly nature, tell me what you would do under certain circumstances. Supposing I had told you that I loved you, and had asked you to be my wife, and you had promised that you would be, and then, after all was settled, you had learned that in my boyhood, when I was foolish, and too young to know my own mind, I had been entangled in an affair with another woman—as you know I was, little Alice—would you cast me off with scorn and contumely, saying that a man's first love was the only love worth having, and the only love you would ever accept? Is it the sign and proof of a true woman, to be so particular as that, little Alice?"

He looked down at her for an answer. The early twilight of winter felt about them. But her face was so near that he could see the lips quiver and break into a flashing smile, and great eyes brighten and glow like stars, and two roses bloom out in the white cheeks as suddenly as if they had been dropped on snow. Poor, poor little Alice! Doubly mocked of Fate. Loving Delorme as she had from the first hour of their meeting, when he put this question to her, she quite misunderstood its import. She thought he had put the question personally to her, to try her love—that this was his way of giving her to understand that if she would accept his heart at second-hand, it was hers; and she answered him with the abandon of her whole soul, in a hurry and rapture of devotion which thrilled her low voice with a feeling which betrayed her long-guarded secret utterly.

"If you were to say that to me, Delorme, I should be the happiest girl on the face of the earth—I should answer you that I glowed in winning your second love—the love of a man in place of that of a boy—that every atom of my being responded to the call of that love, which honored and exalted me as the choice of your riper years!"

And then it was, with a pang of self reproach, that Delorme saw how he had deluded the trusting girl, who stood there, glowing like a seraph, smiling up into his eyes the assurance of her love.

He was dumb with dismay. What to do, what to say, he could not imagine. The shock to this sensitive little creature would be dreadful—even dangerous. Why not allow her to continue in her mistake, and be happy! Since Barbara refused to listen to any overtures from him—since his life must, perforce, be one of loneliness and disappointment, why not try to make this child's life a pleasant one? Would he not be justified to himself and his better nature by doing so? Little Alice would not be so exacting as proud Barbara. Little Alice loved him—was ready to show her love ardently and fondly. Little Alice was in trouble from which he could rescue her, and win her endless gratitude.

He shrunk from wounding and disappointing this fond child who had thrown herself, as it were, into his arms. For several minutes the debate went on within him.

"At least, I will not explain her mistake to her now," he compromised. "The humiliation would be too great. My best way will be to write her a letter to-night, telling her about Barbara. Lady Alice," he said, aloud, "the dressing-bell rung some minutes ago. We will go in now. Whatever happens, be at peace, in the knowledge that I will never forsake you, while it is in my power to serve you. If you loathe my cousin, I will find a way for you to escape this marriage with him."

They went on toward the house, Lady Alice happy, and yet wondering at her companion's manner; while, not far behind them, concealed by the twilight and the shrubbery, stole Lord Ross, with a smile of cunning and triumph on his lips. He had been playing eavesdropper.

CHAPTER XVIII.

AT A CRITICAL TIME FOR ALL.

DELOME did not write the letter of explanation to Lady Alice that night. The image of her lovely, loving, trustful face floated between him and the paper whenever he attempted it. He would almost have cut off his right hand rather than be compelled to send her such a letter. The delicacy, the generosity of his nature rose up against it; nor could he help being touched by her devotion to him; so that, amidst conflicting feelings, he finally settled the matter with himself thus: "To-morrow I will again seek an interview with Barbara—insist upon it—take no refusal. I will talk with her, face to face, and if she still persists in ruining her happiness and my own, for a whim, why, then, little Alice shall never be deceived by words from me. I will marry her, to save her from my cousin, and do my best to make her happy—to hide from her that I wed her from pity, not from love."

The following morning Lord Ross, at the breakfast-table, was oppressively attentive to him, and in the pleasantest of moods. He smiled on his daughter with fatherly affection, rallying her on her sudden recovery of bloom, until he made her blush like a rose. A more suspicious person than Delorme, without some hint of the truth to go upon, would never dream that this polished nobleman had been playing eavesdropper, and that he was busily plotting how to outgeneral the man who would steal his daughter from the earl, and thus disappoint him of the £20,000 the countess had pledged him the day Lady Alice became her son's wife.

The breakfast was the pleasantest for many a day. The countess borrowed her colors from the others, and was graciously benign. Lady Alice laughed out, once or twice,

to; Herbert would not allow Delorme out of his sight, while the countess begged that he would indulge his cousin in his wish. The consequence of all was that Delorme never got to the village that day.

But the next morning, his cousin's sudden illness being as suddenly over—at least to the extent that he was out of danger—Delorme affirmed the need of a walk in the fresh air, after his vigils in the sick room, and started off for Dunleath port.

He had not been alone with Lady Alice since they had come in from their walk in the limo-avenue, and he wished to be free to decide on his course before he should again have an exclusive interview with her.

But it was not of Lady Alice he thought as he walked toward the village. Barbara, the beautiful, the capricious, the self-willed—Barbara, whose very faults made her the more bewitching—Barbara, whose face he had beheld two days ago, filled all his mind, crowding out her gentle rival utterly. He did not go by the road on this occasion, but followed a path through the park and woods which brought him out at a stile, leading over into the churchyard of the cathedral.

He approached the place where he had seen her. Forchance she might be there again!

If so, what better place for their interview?

He crept forward, to reconnoiter the spot where she had sat on the low gray tomb. Yes! she was there! But, perdition! not alone.

It was very tiresome, very stupid, at the ancient inn for Miss Rensselaer. The previous day had been a long one; not all of Mrs. Courtenay's vivacious gossip could make it a brief one. Perhaps the proud girl had fancied that her lover would come begging, a second time, at her door. If so, she was mistaken; the tedious day dragged itself out, and she had the pleasure of remaining at her window, painting pictures in her fancy, as she looked out toward the turrets and towers of Dunleath castle, of Delorme walking about its storied galleries and pleasure-grounds with the lovely Lady Alice, to whom, according to Mrs. Courtenay's story, he was surreptitiously betrothed.

Proud Barbara's pillow was drenched with tears that night. She even met her friend, Mrs. Courtenay, coldly the next morning, explaining her heavy eyes and pale cheeks by affirming that she was homesick, and that she wanted to see her papa, and it would be such an age before he could get to her. And oh, where was aunt Margaret? And ah, what an unhappy girl she was!

However, an hour after her late breakfast, arrived Arthur Granbury.

He had ridden since eleven the previous night, so as to bring the news, and her purchases, as quickly as possible. He was glad to see her as if he had been away a month; his eyes sparkled; he took her hand eagerly, kissing it, but looking at her lips as if he longed for liberty to kiss them instead. In her loneliness and her neglected state, Barbara felt curiously happy to see him, flattered at his haste to return, and appreciative of his good qualities. If pity is akin to love, *gratitude* certainly is; and hence she was in the same danger with Granbury that Delorme was with Lady Alice.

Arthur had done a great deal of work the previous day. He had sent cable dispatches home and received answers; he had one in his pocket from Mr. Rensselaer, stating that he would start the following day for England and hoped to arrive in Liverpool by the 24th. Barbara laughed and wept over the insensate slip of paper; she had gone through so much that her nerves were not to be depended on for steadiness. "Dear, darling papa," she cried, "I never knew before what an old precious you were!" while Arthur watched her enviously as she kissed the dispatch, and admired her more than ever.

Granbury had also drawn money at an English-American house, for her use and his own. And he had given her orders to a great establishment where ladies' outfits were to be had, at three hours' notice, and had returned with a large box full of new things, which Barbara, as soon as she could decently leave him, proceeded to explore.

"You won't be gone long?" he pleaded, as she went to her room to open the box.

"No, Mr. Granbury, and I will walk with you when I come down."

So, in about half an hour, she had come down to him, in the inn-parlor, wearing a fresh dress of some soft brown material, with a seal skin jacket and cap, which, with her short crisp curls, made her too deliciously spirited and handsome for any lover to look upon unmoved.

"Shall we walk on the beach?" Granbury had asked.

"It is too blustering there; I will take you to see the cathedral. I was there day before yesterday; you would regret losing an opportunity to examine it—a portion of it is five hundred years old, and so are some of the 'venerable yews'; and there are such charming windows and such an interesting churchyard, full of graves."

"Let us go there, by all means," and they had gone.

They had borrowed the key of the sexton, living not far away, and gone inside to study the windows and the ceiling, and when they had "done" the inside of the building, they wandered about, viewing its exterior, and reading the inscriptions on old headstones, until, finally, they had sat to rest on the same gray marble slab where Barbara had sat before.

"I ought really to have gone on to Paris today," observed Arthur, after they had chatted awhile. "My business is very important—involving many thousands—but that is nothing compared to my duty to you, Miss Rensselaer. I shall not leave you until you have decided what you are going to do. Indeed, if you will allow me, I will remain near you until your father's arrival. Do you sincerely think it unnecessary to remain in this stupid little port until he comes?"

"I think it more prudent, perhaps. It is quiet and safe here, for me; a young lady with no companions of her own sex must be discreet, you know. But I cannot think of detaining you, Mr. Granbury. Why should I? I am safe, and as comfortable as need be. In two weeks papa will be here. The thought that you were losing thousands on my account would be very embarrassing," and she laughed.

"Barbara," said Granbury, very seriously, "do you forget those hours we spent together alone in the water? They were equal to half a lifetime, if one counts by intensity of experience. I told you then that I—"

"I know it—I know it!" she interrupted him, hastily. "I have not forgotten; but I don't wish you to speak so again. Pray do not! It will only make us both unhappy. Please!" as he tried to go on, "hear what I have to say, first. That I honor, esteem—love you, even—as a dear friend and brother, who has saved my life, and behaved toward me with such gallantry, courtesy, heroism, that I have no words in which to express my admiration—that you are assured. You can never, Mr. Granbury, be less dear to me than a be-

loved relative—I can never forget what you have done for me. But—but—I am engaged to another," and Barbara raised her handkerchief to her eyes.

"Engaged!" stammered Arthur. "Then I must sadly have misunderstood your father. He gave me permission to pay my addresses to you, not a week before we sailed."

"Ah! but I was only engaged a few days before!"

"To whom? Or is it too great a liberty for me to ask?"

"Oh, no, Mr. Granbury. You have a right to know. I will tell you—in a moment—as soon as I can summon courage to do it. To my cousin Herman."

"Is it possible?"—the tone of surprise and contempt which the young broker, in his astonishment, had no time to repress, stung Barbara's pride unbearably.

The handkerchief came down from before her flashing eyes, and her lips quivered, as she said, in intense scorn:

"Yes, my cousin Herman, and I despise him."

"Then why are you engaged to him?—is it a case of compulsion?"

"Oh, no, no, no! it is only a case of self-will and ill-temper, Mr. Granbury."

"On your part?"

"Yes, on my part. I was dreadfully angry, and I flung myself into my cousin's arms to spite somebody else. Only think, we were to have been married on Christmas! But I will never marry him now. I made up my mind to that when we were freezing in that cold water, Mr. Granbury. I saw my conduct in its true light then. When papa arrives, I shall tell him just how wicked I have been, and that I mean to be a good girl after this, and stay with him, and never love any one but him—never marry at all," and all of a sudden the fire in the wonderful, changing eyes was quenched in tears, as she looked at her companion entreatingly.

"I understand," he said, after a moment's silence, turning pale and cold, and moving further from her on the gray slab. "You love the 'somebody else' whom you engaged yourself to your cousin 'to spite.' That is clear enough. You love this 'somebody else,' and I have no chance at all."

"I did love him," answered Barbara, sadly, "but we quarreled; I dismissed him, and I shall never marry him now, for he will lead to the altar another lady on Christmas day."

At this news the man by her side tried very hard to look sympathetic; but he failed. Something of hope and triumph came back to his bright eyes, and, as he drew closer to her again, he spoke in eager tones, getting possession of her little gloved hand as he proceeded:

"Then I shall not despair. No, indeed, Miss Rensselaer, you give me a new lease of hope! It is impossible that you shall always remember, always grieve for this man. He will soon be married to another. Very good! It follows that it will then be wrong for you to think of him at all, and you are not the girl to do anything wrong. You will shut him out of your pure bosom at once. Nature abhors a vacuum—some one else must creep into his place! Let me be that one! Dearest, adored Barbara, I ask nothing just yet. Only give me a chance. Think of me occasionally—and always of how I love you—of how sad I am, waiting, waiting for you to recall me—to breathe the first word of tenderness in my patient ear. Remember, that I am always waiting—hoping, expecting my recall."

It was at the point where he pleaded—"Dearest, adored Barbara," that Delorme reached the thicket of box, and peering through the not only saw, but heard, his fiery, handsome, impassioned rival. He saw that Barbara listened kindly—that she did not withdraw her hand; his sense of honor would permit him to linger no longer—he withdrew as silently as he had approached, with the bitterness of death in his heart.

"She never loved me from the beginning," he said to himself. "She is that meanest of women—a vain coquette!"

In his rage and jealousy he resolved that she should meet him, face to face, eye to eye, in this new lover's presence; so he went around to the front of the cathedral and stood, apparently engaged in studying its architecture, in the path which the two must take when they came out of the churchyard.

In ten minutes they passed him; the gentle man lifted his hat, with American courtesy, to the stranger in his path; but the lady never lifted those long black eyelashes which lay so droopingly on her very cheeks, nor those veiled eyes from the ground on which they were fixed. So Delorme believed that he had missed his aim.

But a few moments later, when a turn in the road had taken them out of sight of the cathedral, Arthur felt the light weight on his arm suddenly increase, and looking around at his sinking companion, saw that she had fainted. In alarm, he picked her up in his arms and ran with her in the direction of the village, being glad enough soon to hail a farm-wagon which was passing, and obtain assistance in conveying his burden to the inn. By the time they reached it Barbara had partially revived; and no mortal, save herself, dreamed that it was the one instantaneous half-glance she had cast at the stranger, as she came around the corner of the cathedral, that had wrought the mischief. Granbury, of course, attributed her illness to the effect of what she had suffered in the water, resolving not to leave her to the care of the ignorant people of the inn, for two or three days more, at least.

As Barbara was being lifted out of the wagon Mrs. Courtenay came hurrying out of the inn, with a traveling-bag in her hand, which a porter took from her and placed in a carriage in waiting at the door. Seeing Miss Rensselaer she rushed up to her wringing her hands.

"I have had a telegram from Eaton: my boy is very ill—scarlet fever. I am to come at once!" and before Barbara had aroused herself to know what it all meant, was in the carriage, and being driven at a rapid rate to meet the train.

Before Delorme returned from his walk a similar telegram overtook him. He hurried to the castle to prepare for the journey; but, as he was too late for the train which Mrs. Courtenay had taken, he had ample time to pack his valise—far more time to wait, in the anguish of suspense, than he desired.

He was in no mood, now, to confer with Lady Alice, or to consider the dilemma in which he was placed; he was fondly attached to the bright, handsome, promising boy who bore his name. His contempt and hatred of the mother did not alter his feelings toward the child, whom circumstances prevented his seeing often, but whom he loved and had always bounteously provided for.

It seemed a weary day until the hour came for being driven to the nine o'clock evening train. He had almost forgotten little Alice; but as he ran up to his room for something at the last moment, which he had overlooked, she met him at the head of the stairs—pale, heavy-eyed, sobbing, she threw herself into his arms.

"If you should not be back here by Christmas day, Delorme!"

And then, realizing the state of her mind, the danger from which he had pledged himself to rescue her, he kissed her forehead, saying:

"Though it should be my boy's funeral-day, little Alice, I will not fail you."

Lord Ross, through his half-open chamber door, heard the promise and laughed.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 340.)

WHICH?

(After the German of Helme.)

BY HENRI MONTAIGNE.

Now, Johnnie Ray, bring out the gray, and put the saddle on her, and ride with all the speed ye may straight down to Kirby's Corner.

Then o'er the hill and by the mill To old man Robeson's quarters; And ask who marries Handsome Will—Which of his pretty daughters.

And if it be that black-eyed Jan, With cheeks brown as a berry, Then back again like lightning then, And we will both make merry.

But if 'tis Sue, whose eyes are blue, Care not whom ye sup with, Ride slowly back, and bring with you A rope to hang me up with.

The Bargains They Made.

BY MINNIE V. HOLM.

JUST at twilight.

Daisy Green sat on the top step of the vine-clad porch, swinging her straw hat to and fro, and gazing absently out over the rye-gold fields.

Daisy Green! Not an uncommon name, and yet it was destined to have its spice of romance.

A cozy cottage 'way off—well, somewhere. A home imbedded in flowers, with an old-fashioned porch all hung with honeysuckle where the bees buzzed; buzzed! the loving day; and to the right and left orchards and fields fairly breathing their richness.

Hiram Green had left the estate well secured to his child, and the men were busy enough, now, on the eve of harvest-time. It would all be Daisy's when she came of age, but at present, under the will, it was conducted by her aunt—an old maid, to be sure—the height of whose ambition seemed to be apexed in pots, pans and kettles.

Very little thought Daisy of the rich and beautiful acres soon to be her own—though she was nearly twenty-one, and, I may add, as lovely as her disposition was sweet and gay.

Now, then, what was the matter?

There had been a picnic that day. Of course Daisy was there. And she remembered how handsome Louis Walton had talked quite lovingly, and finally made known his heart's adoration for the heiress of Green Farm. They walked under the trees together, plucked wild-flowers for mutual bouquets, shared their lunch on the same cloth—in brief, Louis was accepted as the one god of Daisy's first love-dream.

And what had he done? Nothing much—only kissed the blue-eyed "city" girl who was spending summer vacation at neighbor Dupée's. True, it was a game of romp and forfeit; but since he kissed Daisy, she had carefully reserved her red lips exclusively for him, and thought it proper that he should imitate her.

In an angry moment she deserted the picnic-party, and on reaching home tossed her basket spitefully into the hall. Then, sitting on the step with considerable force, she fell to wondering whether Louis really did prefer blue eyes to brown, and if he did—well, she wished she had blue eyes.

Louis was from the city, too. You may have read of such as he in the story papers: visiting in the country, met his Daisy at the farm-cottage and became desperately infatuated on the instant.

"Daisy!" exclaimed her aunt, who came to the door at the sound of the rattling basket. "Why! whatever upon air is the matter? I thought you were down to the picnic a-joyn' yourself."

"So I was—z-z!" answered Daisy, abruptly, and dwelling tragically on the "z-z."

"An' here you air, sot down an' frownin' like as if it was the day o' kingdom come. Sakes! child, don't look that a-way. What's it about, anyhow?"

"Louis kissed another girl!"

It blurted right out—she couldn't help it. And with the brief utterance that told the whole mountain of her woe she pulled so hard on her hat-strings that they came asunder with a rip.

Many persons, especially the men, would say of my Daisy, that she was a dreadfully foolish girl. But, it's a hard thing for a young betrothed to stand by and see her lover take another girl in his arms and kiss her right square on the mouth. I've "been there." I "know how it is, etc." Don't laugh, though; that was many years ago, and I can afford to tell it now.

As Daisy revealed her troubles, aunt Euphrasia threw up her arms in disgust—they were bare arms, smeared with dough, for she had come from the dough-pan to see who threw that basket along the entry.

"Do tell!" she exclaimed. "And ain't I been a warnin' you that Louis Walton wasn't any better'n he'd ought to be! Let them city chaps alone for captivat'n of a young girl's heart, an' leavin' her to woe forevermore. Don't I know!—haven't I read about 'em in that weekly paper Parson Squint brings up here every Monday? Take my advice—which I gave it to you long ago—don't have nothing more to do with that scamp. I always did feel like grabbin' him by the neck an'—"

What more of such solace Daisy might have received, it was cut short by an apparition in the doorway. Parson Squint himself—a meek-mannered, sleek-looking, pale-eyed expounder of theology, geology, hygiene and history. He had, of late, cast yearning looks on Miss Euphrasia, causing her half-withered pulse to fairly itch with the vigor of hope that tries to seize a "last chance."

Why she always took pains to appear her nicest, talk her gentlest and smile her broadest at the periodical visits of the parson, was a conundrum which Daisy had solved some time past.

The parson was extraordinarily early this evening; Euphrasia was by no means prepared to receive visitors in her present plight, and notwithstanding Daisy's exceeding ill-humor she smiled at her aunt's exclamation.

"Land sakes!" hissed-whispered the gushing Euphrasia, and fled up-stairs as if pursued by a demon of darkness!

Had it not been for Daisy the bread would never have been baked. She went into the kitchen, rolled up her sleeves, tied on her apron and dug away at the half-kneaded dough in solemn silence.

Euphrasia was wonderful spry, and Parson Squint had not long to wait.

"Well, parson, I'm real down glad to see you; I am indeed."

Instead of the usual bow of formality, the reverend Squint strode forward, and grasping her outstretched palm with one hand, spread the other pathetically over his handkerchief-pocket.

"Miss Euphrasia, pardon my seeming rudeness. A-hem! time and privileges have imbued my quiet nature with impetuosity. You—ah!—you do not know, you cannot conceive, I—a—have come upon an important mission. To-day I am to live or die. Ah! hear me. Deignful wman!—glorious Euphrasia! listen to me, I implore—"

"Why, parson!" murmured the blushing Euphrasia, aglow with an ecstasy that tingled in her ears and made her heart thump.

"Do be calm, now. Come sit down some. You must be quite unwell, I reckon."

Walking on tip-toe, and clinging to the tips of her fingers, he led her to the sofa, and then—then—shall I tell?—the next instant found Parson Squint on his knees at the feet of the prim old maid.

Euphrasia had long expected, and was anxious for, this very scene. Having conceived a rare liking for the parson, she had done her best to lure and net him. It had proven an easy conquest.

Matters were soon fixed, you may believe. The parson was in a hurry, and Euphrasia was nothing loth. But here occurred an obstacle. The reverend Squint was short of funds just then—would have money in a month or so, when the affair might come off in proper style, with a newly-furnished house, etc.

She was not to be balked by any such dilemma. Delays were dangerous. And as proposals had been tantalizingly scarce in Miss Euphrasia's lifetime, she did not relish the possible risk of losing the parson during an intervening month.

There was Daisy's bank account. Euphrasia was trustee, had always signed the checks and duly accounted for them. Would it be a crime to borrow a few hundred, without Daisy's knowledge, until Parson Squint could return? There was a long and serious consideration of the alternative, and it ended by Euphrasia placing in his hands a check for five hundred dollars, with instructions to disburse it judiciously.

Before noon next day, it was rumored that Parson Squint and Euphrasia Green were engaged. Heigho! but the news did fly. And there were new dresses and linen to be made up, lots of things to buy; and Daisy sewed industriously, to help her aunt along, you know.

Matters were worse for Daisy. On the day after the picnic Louis Walton had vanished, without even a parting message for the anxious heart at Green Farm. Everywhere Daisy looked, she seemed to see a pair of blue eyes and a head of golden hair. She was sad, but strong; no pining and weeping—only a torturous calm which she bore bravely.

The night before the wedding day! Parson Squint had not been seen nor heard of for several days. But Euphrasia was content. She thought she would soon have him all to herself, and this satisfied her.

And now, on the bridal eve, with everything in readiness, she sat at the parlor window, in a romantic attitude, with glad eyes gazing at the stars that gleefully peeped in the drawing shadows of night.

Then a murmur of voices on the porch reached her, and—could she believe it!—there was Louis Walton, with Daisy tight in his arms.

"Oh, Louis! how could you treat me so?"

"My dear little Daisy! And so, you thought me a villain, eh?"

"I may as well confess, I began to fear that aunt Euphrasia was right."

"And, pray, what did aunt Euphrasia prophesy?"

"That you only came here to play with me, and never did really love me."

"There, Daisy"—and he kissed her passionately—"you know the whole truth when I tell you that my poor, crippled brother died while I was enjoying myself, unconscious of his sickness, at the picnic. A telegram called me home instantly. I returned to you at the earliest opportunity. Now, will you trust me—for I love you better than all the world beside!"

"Louis!" was all she whispered, nestling closer in the strong arms that held her.

"Speaking of your aunt Euphrasia, that reminds me: there's a rumor that she and Parson Squint are to be married."

"The wedding comes off to-morrow. You're just in time," said Daisy, brightly.

"To-morrow! Why, I met him, yesterday, a hundred miles from here, and he said he was on his way to California—"

They were interrupted and startled by a terrific shriek, and looked around just in time to see Euphrasia Green tumble backward, heels over head, from the window.

It was too much to bear. The truth burst upon her like a revelation of horrors: she had been deceived in love and swindled out of five hundred dollars besides.

For, indeed, Parson Squint was never seen again.

"Don't mourn, aunty," said Daisy, some hours later.

"Oh! it isn't so much the loss of that 'tarnal scamp,' declare! the disappointed maiden, stoutly. 'That don't bother me. But, it's done me, Daisy; if you only knew what I'd done—'"

"There, aunty—I know all about it."

"What?" screamed the startled Euphrasia, turning pale in her guilt.

"I was in the kitchen, you know, and as all the windows were open, I couldn't avoid hearing all that passed. It was all right—I knew how much you wanted to get married. And I say, aunty; I think of the two, I've made the best bargain in love affairs, haven't I?"

Miss Euphrasia sat petrified.

"An' have you forgiv' me for robbin' you of that money?"

"Not yet. But I will, on one condition."

"And what's that?"

"You take back all you said against Louis Walton."

So it was adjusted harmoniously.

Do you see that handsome gothic cottage over there—painted in pearl and brown, with pendant moldings, a garden in front, and vases brimming with trailing flowers?—there—where the porch is hung with baskets, and windows peeping through spruce and shrubbery. Well, there's where she lives; right opposite our house. Now, all you have to do is to find out exactly where I live, and then you can easily discover who Daisy Walton is—or was.

"Is it becoming to me?" asked she, as she paraded in the costume of one hundred years ago, before the man who is not her lord and master, but is her husband. "Yes, my dear," mockily. "Don't you wish I could dress this way all the time?" she asked. "No, but I wish you had lived when that was the style."

Under the Surface:

MURDER WILL OUT.

A STORY OF PHILADELPHIA.

BY WM. MASON TURNER, M. D.,
AUTHOR OF "UNDER RAIL," "MABEL VANE,"
ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXV.

A LONG GAP.

Two long years have now elapsed since the incidents occurred as given in our last chapter. We can do no more than briefly refer to the many events which had happened in the meantime.

Two weeks from the time of her new engagement, Minerva Clayton was married, with much pomp and éclat, to Algernon Floyd, the young and handsome millionaire. It was a brilliant occasion; and the *monde* who attended it did not stop to inquire into the antecedents of bride or groom.

It is recorded of the event that it required three able-bodied clergymen to perform the nuptial rite; and when the ceremony was over, the bride and groom were overwhelmed with congratulations. But as they made their way out of the packed edifice to the carriage which was to convey them to the New York depot, *en route* for Europe, neither of them noticed a man clad in the everyday garments of a factory hand, who leaned against a lamp-post opposite the church and watched the couple as they descended the brown steps.

Yet, Fred Ashe, M. D., who happened at that moment to stride independently and haughtily by, knew that man clad in coarse raiment. For when he saw him, he stepped hastily to him, and drawing his arm in his said sternly, but sympathizingly:

"Come, Clinton, my boy. This is no sight for you. You are humiliating yourself!"

And the two friends hurried away.

Algernon Floyd and his handsome wife were many long months in Europe. But, at last, they returned to Philadelphia, and took up their abode in the Floyd mansion, which, in the meantime, had been sumptuously fitted up.

And those who knew Minerva Clayton of old, fancied that they discovered a shade of sorrow, with deep furrowed lines, looking like disappointment marks, showing on her face.

Dr. Ashe certainly noticed these lines on the young wife's brow, when once he had met her face to face in the bustling, crowded Chestnut street.

But Minerva declined to recognize him; and Fred Ashe would not know the woman who, for money, had trampled in the dust the love of an honest man.

If, however, Minerva, indeed, had her sorrows, she kept them from the outside world. She was often seen with her fine looking, dark-browed husband, on the streets or on the drives. With Algernon Floyd there were times when ominous, anxious frowns wrinkled his brow. Then it was frequently that hot, angry words fell from his lips. On such occasions, he was cross and snappish, even with his black-haired wife.

And these occasions were always noticed as following the visits of a stout, square-built, rough-looking man, who came quite often. And these strange visits began just as soon as Floyd and his wife had returned from their foreign tour.

Once, too, an old woman, decent and well-clad, yet masculine and strong-minded in appearance, had asked and gained admittance to Algernon Floyd's presence. At first the rich man pretended not to recognize his visitor, and was rudely turning away from her; but a single word from his strange visitor, caused him at once to hurry up to her, speak, in a low breath, a hasty word in her ear, and bid her follow him to the library.

Then again the old woman came. It was a raw, dark evening in the fall. Algernon Floyd

active as a tiger, and her opponent gained no advantage over her. But, all at once, a knife glanced in the man's hand; its keen edge touched the woman's throat. But, before it could strike deep, the cold barrel of a pistol was pressed to his temple, and the creaking of a trigger echoed on his ear.

"Hold, Algernon Floyd! or, by the heavens above us, you are a dead man!" hissed the amazon, as she pushed her vantage-ground.

Slowly the man recoiled; he flung his knife upon the table.

"There! there! Moll!" he muttered, in a half-whining tone; "we'll come to terms. Put up your pistol and sit down."

"For once, captain, you are wise! We will come to terms; but, mark you, my pretty fellow, I'll dictate those terms!"

Just then there was a slight shake of the bolt of the door opening into the front sitting-room.

Algernon Floyd and his singular visitor both turned; but they saw nothing. They saw naught of the white, scarred face, the disheveled tresses, the wild, starting eyes of Minerva, who fled away, sickened and terror-stricken, in the darkness of the room.

The interview between Algernon Floyd and old Moll lasted more than two hours; and when, at last, the woman left, she carried away a bag of gold, while, in her right hand, she clutched a roll of crisp notes.

Yes; Minerva, the rich man's wife, had noted the comings and goings of this old woman, and of the stout, square-built man. The young wife knew that there was a secret, terrible perhaps, which had been kept from her. She felt that this woman and this man held over her dark-bearded husband an unknown, but a fearful power.

We must hasten. Jim Walton and Bloody Moll often held long midnight conferences together in the little house on the river. On several occasions a swarthy negro of gigantic stature was present at these conferences; and he answered to the name of Black Ben.

As the reader knows, Clinton Craig, in a single day, had been cast forth into the world, and thrown upon his own resources. He was penniless and almost friendless. Dr. Ashe was true to him; he loved him now—sympathized with him more than ever. The young physician had placed his purse at his friend's disposal; but Clinton Craig did not touch it.

At once the disinherited young man set about getting employment; he was determined to let no time pass idly on his hands. At first he was disheartened; still he looked for work. And at length, Clinton Craig, lately heir-expectant to a princely fortune, was engaged as a common workman in a cotton mill at the Falls; and his magnificent wages amounted to six dollars per week. Yet that pittance made him happy, for it gave him independence.

One day in passing through an apartment in the thundering factory, Clinton paused as if struck by lightning. He started back and gasped for breath.

Seated before a buzzing loom, her thin, white face bending over the flying shuttle, was Alice Ray. In a moment the young man was by her side. He reached down and took her small, attenuated hand in his. He clasped that hand in his own sturdy palm now hardened and browned by honest toil.

The girl gave one startled glance at him, and, half-springing to her feet with a wild, almost unmeaning love-light in her eyes, she murmured just loud enough for him to hear it: "Heaven be praised! Clinton, dear Clinton! that we meet again! I know all!"

But the others in that bustling, busy mill noted not the incident, though it occurred right under their eyes.

And want, too—for she was now, not only an orphan, but almost penniless—had forced Alice Ray, the lumberman's daughter, into the mills.

And Providence had ordered this singular reunion between Alice Ray and Clinton Craig. It is needless for us to trace further their intimacy, which time, circumstance and God forced upon them.

Time sped on. Day by day young Craig grew in the favor of his employers. At last he was elevated to the lucrative position of book-keeper. The young man now ordered a light boat. In this he rowed himself and Alice down to the city; for they lived near Fairmount in an humble but neat boarding-house, together. Some of the most blissful moments of Clinton Craig's life were spent as he pulled his light skiff glidingly over the glassy Schuylkill to and from work.

Dr. Ashe knew of all this; he knew, too, that, at the time we are now brooding thread, Alice was affianced to his friend "Clint."

CHAPTER XXVI.

SHADOWS ON THE SCHUYLKILL.

The mellow moonlight of an autumn night glimmered down on the sleeping river, showering its silver radiance gloriously over the rippling waters, shimmering sadly through the leafless trees on the bank, while here and there in the dim, gray light, pale, spectral marbles marked Laurel Hill, the silent city of the dead. The air was balmy, though crisp; for the sere leaves had fallen, and frosts had whitened the earth.

Gently glided the light boat over the placid surface of the river, leaving scarcely a ripple behind it.

With long, slow strokes the man who had the oars drove the boat onward. It scarcely required an effort; for the current was with him, and the wind in his face, light and fitful. In the stern-shoals of the small craft sat a maiden—her shoulders wrapped in a warm shawl.

And between him who lazily rowed the boat and her who sat watching him with earnest, loving eyes, a sweet heart-talk was carried on.

All was quiet. On this particular night no noisy crews made the air discordant with shout and song; and the coquetish breeze alone toyed with the honeyed words that were flung to it by the loving two who sailed the waters under the autumn moonlight.

The reader knows who were the occupants of that light skiff that glided so gently down the stream toward the noisy, bustling city in the distance.

Clinton Craig was homeward bound; and Alice Ray, as was her custom, was with him. His and her work was over for the day.

Quietly, yet swiftly, the boat dropped down. Laurel Hill was now some distance behind them; the ice-houses on the shore, dim and unseen in the gray gloom of the autumn night, were reached; and there ahead of them stretched the shadowy outline of Girard avenue bridge.

As they neared this lofty structure Clinton Craig edged the boat off to the middle of the river.

"Where are you going, Clinton?" asked the girl in a low, sweet voice, as she looked up in some surprise.

"Through the second arch, where there are no rocks, darling," was the answer. "The river is so low that there is danger near the shore."

He continued to urge the boat toward the middle of the stream.

"No, no, Clinton; please go the old way," said Alice, half-appealingly; "it is more like our custom; and, darling, I love to hear the waters roar and splash against the rocks. I'll sit in the bow, darling, and warn you of the rocks, as I have done many a dark night."

"As you will, Alice," replied the young man, cheerfully, as he checked the boat, and by a few dextrous strokes pointed the bow toward the shore. "Give me your hand, darling. So. Now sit down and keep a bright lookout," he continued, as Alice stepped nimbly by him and seated herself in the head of the skiff.

They were now rapidly nearing the bridge; the boat was, every moment, feeling the stronger current rushing between the near shore and the massive granite buttress. It shot away like a great winged bird. A moment passed, and amid the roar and rush of the waters they glided beneath the dark, overhanging bridge.

Suddenly, however, the boat yawed, and swung, violently, half-bows around.

"Heigho! on a rock, Alice!" queried the young man, glancing behind him.

"No, darling; I grasped at a rose floating on the water; but, alas! I missed it. Back water, Clinton; for that rose—as it has played me a trick—I shall have!" and the girl laughed merrily. "Pull, Clinton! I've lost the rose; pull hard; you've been lazy enough!"

The young man laughed in response, and bent lustily to the oars. He reversed his seat, and, without coming about, gave way vigorously.

"Here it is! Ha! Clinton—quick!" exclaimed the girl, hurriedly; at the same time she adroitly cast the light anchor over the bows, and brought the boat to a standstill.

The young man leaped to his feet and went forward.

Alice was bending low over the gunwale, her white hand clutching nervously what seemed to be a cord or sash. Mistaking its shape and dull red, faded hue for a rose, she had caught the tassel in her hand.

"I have not got the rose, Clinton," she said in a low breath; "but I have caught something. Take hold, Clinton, and relieve me. There is something at the end of this line. There! now, pull, Clinton!"

(To be continued—commenced in No. 338.)

A BOUQUET.

BY HARVEY HOWARD.

What shall I send to my love for a token?
A missive of words that are sweeter than spoken?
A vow and a bond that shall never be broken?

Whatever says to my love, "I adore you,"
No other maiden has pleased me before you,
Whatever shall say to my love that her favor
Has come to my life, its best love and savor.
The cowslip, so humble, to call her divine;
The silver-barked linden—I want her for mine;
The woodbine shall bind her for me and me only;
No lotus I'll send her, the flower of the lonely—
No yew shall I send her, the message of sadness;
But the sturdy wood-sorrel, the emblem of gladness.

The sorrel to-day, and the hawthorn to-morrow,
In hopes that our future may bring us no sorrow,
This dahlia shall show her my heart's deep devotion;
"Heartsease," "Forget-me-not," life with emotion;
The fuchsia and fern, sincere and confiding;
Bell-flower, geranium, love ever abiding.

Sweet love, I am earnest; I love—I adore you!
Then read the love-letter I lay here before you.

Centennial Stories.

LOT MERRILL'S EXPLOIT.

BY T. C. HARBAUGH.

SCHUYLER was retiring before Burgoyne, and the forests of northern New York were echoing to the tramp of two armies—one in slow retreat, and the other advancing with almost insolent confidence.

The mellow skies of summer were overhead, and in the fertile valleys the wheat-heads were turning to gold. The British army was in a boast for provisions, and Burgoyne had declared his intention of subsisting on the country. He prepared to thresh the bearded grain, and thus supply his troops with flour. Schuyler did not want to leave the prize to his adversary; but when he thought of the many people who would suffer if he applied the torch of war to the golden stalks, he marched on, destroying not.

But he did fell trees and destroy bridges in the rear of his retreating detachments, and in the forests night and day rung the axes of the unconquered patriot.

At the period of which I write, there belonged to the American army a young soldier named Lot Merrill. He had served with distinction through several previous campaigns, and was accounted the most fearless man in his brigade. Being very powerful, he was detailed to assist in the work of obstructing Burgoyne's line of march, and more than once the British commander was called upon to curse the work of the Yankee soldier's hands.

One morning when the obstructing party was mustered for orders, Merrill was found to be missing. Great surprise was expressed at this discovery, and the camp was searched in vain for him. It was hard for those who knew him to believe that he had deserted, for he had been foremost in the hazardous work assigned to the corps, and the day passed without his return.

"He may have returned home," remarked one of his companions to a comrade. "He was deploring that his wheat, just ripe for the sickle, should furnish sustenance to Burgoyne, and more than once yesterday he upbraided himself for leaving it standing behind him."

"I do not think that he would go home at such a time as this," was the reply. "He would probably find Burgoyne on his farm, and his wheat garnered by American sickles in British hands. I am beginning to believe, with the rest, that he has grown tired of this fight against odds, and that we will see Strong Lot no more."

The young soldier had abandoned the obstructing corps in the night; but he had not passed over to the enemy with a heart despairing of the American cause.

All through the night he journeyed toward the beautiful farm which he had lately left to the mercy of the invaders. He thought of his fields of golden grain, and its well-stocked granaries. He did not forget that the roof of the old farm-house sheltered the silvered head of a venerable mother, nor that a father lay buried in one corner of the ripest field of grain.

Back toward the farm and directly toward the British army, Strong Lot, as he was called by Schuyler's men, hurried through the night—his guide, at times, a brilliant star.

He reached a hill-top that overlooked the plain whereon lay his estate in the evening of the next day. Casting his eyes over the country beneath his station he descried the advance of Burgoyne's army. It was already on his

land, and he foresaw the destruction of his grain.

It was a sight that fired the patriot's heart, and made him clench his hands. He glanced to the right and saw acres of golden heads, and to his left was plenty for the soldiers of the king. It must have seemed a paradise to Burgoyne—wheat-fields on every side, and a summer sky above him.

Strong Lot did not desert the summit of the hill until he saw the army make preparations for its bivouac. Then he descended, and glided toward a small farm-house almost within sight of his own.

He did not knock, but opened the door without ceremony, and strode boldly into the room. His entrance was followed by a woman's cry, and a young girl started from him with a pallid face.

"Lot Merrill, tell me what this means?" she cried. "Burgoyne's army is here and so are you! I thought you were with Schuyler. Have you deserted the cause because the skies are dark? Have you turned traitor to your country? If you have, leave this house immediately, and know that Mary Randall will forget you."

The soldier smiled and touched the girl's arm as he replied:

"You're true as steel to the cause, Mary," he said, "and so is Lot Merrill. When he descends Schuyler and turns his back to him, let an American bullet reach his heart. But, listen to me, Mary; Burgoyne is here!"

"His headquarters are your home. I saw him dismount at the door a few moments before you came."

"I trust he will sleep well in my house. Mother will probably give him her rebel son's bed," and the patriot laughed. "But I came home for a purpose. My grain is ripe, and Heaven has given us a bountiful harvest. I am going to lower the golden heads."

The fair young girl gave him a puzzled look. "You cannot harvest the grain in the midst of the British army," she cried. "Burgoyne himself will cut it to-morrow—nay, to-night, perhaps, and I fear that precious little of it will see the inside of your granaries."

"Not one grain of it shall feed the British army," said Strong Lot, with emphasis. "Mary, I came home to harvest my fields with the torch!"

A flash of admiration lit up Mary Randall's dark eyes.

"You're the bravest man in America," she cried. "Mother and I sowed twelve acres on our little farm; but not one head of our grain shall fall into the invader's hands!"

Lot Merrill looked down upon the brave girl with a pride which he did not attempt to conceal. "The wind is blowing west and from my house!" he said. "It is sweeping across my fields. Mary, if you stand at your window, you will soon see one of the grandest fires that ever darkened the sky."

Half an hour later a skulking figure passed the Merrill home, and disappeared toward the wheat-fields. It was Strong Lot, who was about to perform one of the most daring deeds ever performed in the midst of a British army. He saw the figures of several British officers in his house as he skulked past the window beyond the sentry's beat, and knew that Burgoyne and his generals were enjoying the hospitality of an American home.

The British army was cantoned almost entirely around him. There was a loophole of escape at Mary Randall's home; but it was a dangerous gateway. "It must be done!" he said, as he reached the dry wheat, and ran his hand over the yellow beards. "If General Burgoyne makes flour on my farm, he must get it from the ashes of this harvest."

The young patriot was armed with a rifle, and his left hand grasped a flambeau ready to be ignited and destroyed.

All at once he dropped among the wheat, and sparks of fire fell upon the light material that formed the outer covering of the torch.

In the blaze that followed the dark face was seen by the stars that dotted the sky with spots of gold. A minute later the wheat was burning, and like a ghost Strong Lot glided across the edge of the field with the destroying torch trailed on the ground.

When he paused and looked at his work a smile of triumph crossed his face. The eastern wind was driving the flames before him, and the crackling of the ripened stalks—though they were his own—was music to the American's ears. He saw that the destruction of his grain was assured before he turned from the spot.

"Flour from ashes, General Burgoyne!" he said, glancing at his home that stood revealed by the glare of the fire.

Then he turned and disappeared in a covey at his left.

He heard hasty commands and the shrill call of the trumpet, and knew that the British camp was aroused. He saw a group of officers on the porch of his home, and knew that Burgoyne and his generals were cursing the hand that had fired the yellow grain.

The covey concealed his retreat, and he emerged from it to see a field burning to his right.

"Mary Randall, you're a brave girl!" he cried, looking at the new fire. "You have destroyed your summer bread by giving your little field to the torch."

He crossed a patch of grass-land unperceived, and was about to climb the garden fence that belonged to the Randall home, when a loud voice startled him.

"She did it. The Yankee women are worse than the men. Here, give me the torch; I'll fire this house of witches!"

Lot Merrill sprang over the fence before the last fierce word had died away, and several blows brought him to a thrilling scene.

On the little porch in the rear of Mary Randall's home stood four British soldiers. The young girl, with pallid face but calm, confronted them, and the tableau was revealed by a torch that crackled above an ensign's head.

"I'll burn the witches out!" cried a soldier, as Strong Lot made his appearance upon the scene, and the torch was snatched from his possessor's grasp.

"Watch the girl!" he cried to his companions, as he bounded toward the door with the terrible agent of war in his maddened hand. But he paused on the threshold, for a rifle had cracked, and the next instant he staggered back with a death-cry.

The torch, clutched tightly by the dead hand, sent up a sickly light from the floor, but it revealed the man who leaped upon the porch and dealt blows thick and fast with clubbed rifle.

He struck surely and fatally, for there was a giant's strength in his powerful arms, and in a very short time four British soldiers lay still on the bloody porch.

The soldier's victory was complete, and when he again thought of flight, he found that the destruction of the fields was assured. Dark smoke rolled heavenward; the frightened birds fled screaming over the flames, and a British

army beheld the terrible scene of destruction, powerless to arrest the scarlet demon's course.

Burgoyne surveyed the burning fields from the widow's porch, dreaming not that their owner had applied the torch—that he had turned from Schuyler to penetrate the British camp and snatch a golden prize from the very mouths of its occupants.

The destruction was complete, and on the following day Burgoyne, discomfited and angry, resumed the march southward. During the eventful night Mary Randall and her mother buried the four soldiers, and Strong Lot Merrill fled to the American army with the smoke of his wheat-fields at his back.

Of such stuff, reader, were the heroes and heroines of the Revolution made.

After Burgoyne's surrender, the brave patriot explained to him the mystery of the burning of the grain, and said that he now was going home to wed the daring girl who had so patriotically seconded the work of destruction by destroying her own little all that night.

"That is right!" said Burgoyne; "but if I had caught you that night, I would have had you shot among the ashes of your grain!"

Almost Immortalized.

A STORY TOLD IN THE YEAR 1900

BY EBBEN E. REXFORD.

My friend, Mrs. Dusenberry, met me on my way down to my office yesterday. It was really refreshing to see her after such a time as I had been having with my husband, who had declared that he wouldn't stay at home and take care of the baby, as a Christian father, who knows his place, ought to. He was bound to go shopping, and I found out that he had promised Mrs. Dusenberry's husband, who has also been confined with their terribly cross baby, for some time, that he would meet him at the ferry, and they would go off somewhere and have a real lark, casting family cares to the wind, and letting the children shirk for themselves. I told him I had no objection to his going into the country for a day, if he felt as if domestic cares were wearing on him, and gave him the money to pay his fares and cover all necessary expenses, but I should insist on his taking the children along. He declared he wouldn't. He said a poor father had his hands full at home, and it was ten times worse when he attempted to enjoy a quiet day in the country, and had half a dozen noisy children to look after. He had made up his mind, when the last picnic of the Society of Husbands for the Promotion of Domestic Science came off, that he preferred staying at home. He had been completely fagged out then; and for a week after he couldn't get along with the house-work alone, and I was cross, and complained that he hindered me. No! he'd stay at home, rather than take the children, and because I wouldn't consent to his leaving them, he cried, and we had quite a scene. But I rule my own house, and the result was, he stayed at home, sulky, and I went down to business, feeling anything but in the mood for it. And I had wanted to bring my best and freshest energies to my work, for I was engaged on the crooked whisky case of the Misses Dacombs, and I would have done so, if my husband hadn't made me so much trouble. But he's like all the men. They can't forget that things are not as they used to be.

As I was saying, I met Mrs. Dusenberry. The sight of her did me good. She always looks so resolute and goes ahead. I offered her a cigar and we fell to talking.

"There goes Mrs. Adams," said Mrs. Dusenberry, suddenly, nodding toward the lady in question, as she rode by us on her way to the monthly review of the City Female Light Guards. "I don't like that woman."

"I hold her in the greatest respect," said I. "As the first woman who broke through the prejudices of the people, and took the grand step of woman's right to propose, I venerate her."

"So do I," answered Mrs. Dusenberry, knocking the ashes from her cigar. "Or I should, if she had not got the start of me by ten minutes. Did I ever tell you about it?"

"No," said I. "I think not."

"Well," began Mrs. Dusenberry, "you see, Mrs. Adams and myself were both rather sweet on Mr. Adams. He was one of those shy young men who encouraged us, and he kept both of us dangling after him. But we had never told him that we loved him, for that was in 1880, the year the Woman's Equality bill was passed, but just before it became a law. I made up my mind, if it did become a law, I would be the representative of our sex, by making myself the leader in the great moral reform. I would inaugurate the culmination of our freedom by proposing to Henry Adams."

"It seems Mrs. Dusenberry—Miss Smith, she was then—had come to the same conclusion. I shall never forget the day when the news came flashing over the wires from Washington that the Woman's Equality bill was passed!"

"Never! never! And there were thousands of women whose hearts beat high with hope and pride in this great city that morning. And the men! You ought to have been old enough to have remembered the glum look they wore. At last our shackles were broken, and they were no longer our lords and masters. We were their equals in the law, and we knew that it would be but a little while before we assumed the superior position which woman's talent fits her for."

"We rung the bells. We tried to fire the cannon, but we made a fizzle of that, for some reason. We marched up and down the streets, and made speeches on all the corners. Oh, it was grand! grand!"

Here Mrs. Dusenberry heaved a great sigh, as she proceeded to light a new cigar.

"All at once, as we were parading on Broadway, the thought came to me of what I had made up my mind long ago to do. I was so elated with our triumph that I had forgotten my intention of proposing to Adams. The minutes I thought of I left the ranks and went directly to the home of the man I hoped to make illustrious. How my heart swelled with emotion! If I became the Great First Female Proposer, my name would go down to posterity, in the same list with that of Joan d'Arc. Fame was just before me! I would be the female George Washington of 1880!"

"I rang the bell, and asked if Mr. Adams was at home."

"He was."

"Might I see him?"

"He was engaged just then. Would I wait?"

"I would wait. I sat down, but my impatience was so great that I got up and went in search of him before I had waited two minutes."

"I heard voices in the library."

"The door was open. I looked in. Good heavens! There was Henrietta Smith, and she was just slipping a ring upon his finger. He was pale and agitated. She was radiant with triumph."

"My darling man!" she cried, and clasped him in her arms, and kissed him. "This is the proudest moment of my life. You are mine! I stand at the head of the women of America. You, Henry, are to be the husband of the woman whose name is to be the watchword of Female Liberty. Oh! I am oppressed with the sense of coming greatness. I will kiss you once more, and be gone!"

"I got away without being seen. I had failed of anticipated greatness. If I had been ten minutes earlier! I felt mad enough to scratch her eyes out. I've always hated her since."

"Well, she became the Woman of the Hour. We drew her up and down the streets in a carriage all that afternoon. We serenaded her. We had a grand mass-meeting, at which she presided. She was a goddess, and has been such ever since. And if I had been ten minutes earlier, I might have been the 'Woman who Proposed,' whom Anna Dickinson made immortal by her novel. Well, so goes the world. Perhaps I have been happier, after all. Mr. Dusenberry is a domestic angel, and Mr. Adams isn't, I hear. He neglected the children shamefully, they say."

Mrs. Dusenberry got up, and brushed her coat.

"I have heard it said," I remarked, as I also got up, preparatory to alighting, "that fifty thousand women in this city celebrated their emancipation by making proposals of marriage in the first six months after the passage of the Female Equality Bill. Is it true?"

"In the first six weeks," corrected Mrs. Dusenberry. "We had to import ministers to perform the marriages, and the ceremony was abridged as much as possible, at that. But I'm at my office. Good-morning!"

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PLUNKIN'S SWEETHEART.

BY JOE JOY, JR.

Her eyes are finer far than those
Of which the poets tell us,
The brightness of their light is like
The Aurora Borealis,
And when she shuts them up it's night;
They're bluer than blue Monday,
They are too fine for every day,
And most too nice for Sunday.

She's sweeter than a sugar store,
Indeed, there's no mistaking,
And all the bread turns into cakes
When'er she does the baking.
She has such sweetening power;
The very vinegar turns sweet,
And lemons lose their sour.

Her throat is graceful as two swans—
The finest ever invented;
Her mouth was only made to breathe
The best of airs, well scented,
And common words we mortals use
Ought never pass its portals;
It was not made to feed upon
The pork and beans of mortals.

Her hair is like a chestnut horse,
And banded just like a pistol—
It's finer than a spool of thread,
And lighter than a thistle.
It hangs about in spiral curls,
And tickles on her shoulders;
It is too sweet to ever comb—
And so I've often told her.

Her cheeks, I think, are just as bright
As a new half a dollar,
And whiter by a shade or two
Than my own paper collar.
Her loving heart is just as warm
As a chinchilla Uster,
And just as tender and as soft
As my head, or a bolster.

Her hand's as delicate as her health,
And, oh, I hold it dearly!
And then her fingers taper down
Just like my salary, yearly.
Her name, indeed, I do not like—
It's a Vernon, mine is Plunkin—
If I could change my name to mine,
Oh, wouldn't it be hunkey?

Yankee Boys in Ceylon:

OR,

THE CRUISE OF THE FLYAWAY.

BY C. D. CLARK,

AUTHOR OF "IN THE WILDERNESS," "ROD AND REEL," "CAMP AND CANOE," ETC.

IX.—THE TIGER'S LEAP. ABENHUA'S LEGACY.

For three weeks they had glorious sport, and grew fresher and stronger day by day.

But, as yet, they had not met the royal beast of the eastern jungles, the tiger.

They had slain the elephant, the elk, the leopard, buffalo and deer without number; but as luck would have it, the tiger had not come in their way, and the boys were mourning because they had not had a chance to feel their bones crack under the jaws of the beautiful animal they sought, and the Charmer said that they would not return to the schooner contented unless they had met the royal beast.

"You seek the tiger," he said, one day when they were talking of returning to the schooner. "I have warned you against the terror of the jungles of Ceylon, but you would not listen to me. So be it, then; I will show you the lair of the tiger."

The young hunters were delighted, and the next day was set down as the final hunt. They did not sleep much that night, and at early morning, taking no one with them except the Charmer, they followed him into the jungle. He crossed the river on a raft of logs and struck across through the forest. It was a beautiful day, one of the most beautiful they had yet seen in Ceylon. The forest teemed with life, the monkeys leaped and chattered in the branches, the birds of varied plumage flitted through the leaves. In one part they came upon a flock of those strange birds, the toucan, with beaks so much out of proportion with the rest of the body, and their brilliant plumage shining amid the leaves. Now and then a cobra or a caracilla, aroused by their steps, glided out of sight among the grass, for the snake rarely attacks man unless there is no chance of escape. The deer, aroused from their harbor, started up at their approach, and went careering through the woods at their best speed. But not a trigger was drawn, for they had promised on that day not to waste lead upon any game less royal than the tiger himself.

The Charmer strode on in front. His brow was dark and lowering, and he spoke little. Thus he always was when about to hunt the tiger, for an old prophecy had said that by a tiger he must meet his fate at last. Like all his race, he was superstitious in the extreme, and believed in these old prophecies and visions. Yet he never shunned danger, and had willingly consented to lead them against the tiger even though he met his own fate.

Two hours passed, and the moody fit of the Charmer seemed to have infected the rest.

"See here, Abenhua," said Sawyer, "if you don't like to go on this hunt, say so, and we will turn back."

"Abenhua never turns back in the hour of danger," was the reply.

"Oh, I know that you are as brave as a lion, old fellow; but that is not it. You don't like to go on this hunt for some other reason."

"See," said the Hindoo, "What will be, will be. If I am to die to-day, I shall not have so long to wait before I enter into my rest. There is one thing which troubles me, and one only: when I am gone, who will be kind to my beautiful Rona?"

"See here, old fellow. You know me, don't you? I give you my word that if anything happens to you I will look at Rona as my own sister, and guard her as carefully. You may trust me."

"I do," replied the Charmer. "Then let fate do its worst, since Rona has a guardian so brave and true."

They climbed a rugged ridge which led up among the foothills. The country was so like California that Richard could almost imagine himself again among the foothills of the Sierras. At last they came to a circular plateau, hemmed in on every side by mountain peaks—such a scene as the boys had often seen in their own land in other days. The Charmer took a bow from his back, and ordering them to halt, went away into the surrounding woods. He was not gone long when he was heard approaching, carrying in his arms a mountain kid, which he had disabled, but not killed. He drove a stake into the ground and made the kid fast, and then the party drew back and sought places of shelter among the rocks. The kid at first endeavored to escape, but finding itself tied, began to struggle and bleat mournfully. The peculiar wail sounded through the forest and mountains, and a peculiar smile passed over the face of the Hindoo.

"He will hear it, the great king of the woods," he said. "He will say: 'There is food for me and for my mate; let us go and take it.' He will come, and you will know what it is to fight with the royal tiger."

Half an hour passed, and nothing was heard. The boys were getting impatient, as the wailing of the kid seemed to bear no fruit. Suddenly a rustling sound was heard, and the kid redoubled his efforts to escape, and a warning whisper from the Charmer made them grasp their weapons, and throw them forward, ready for work.

"Oh, look, look!" he whispered.

A gigantic black and yellow form came suddenly into view on the right-hand side of the opening, coming up the ridge. The long, graceful body, the black and yellow stripes, the beautiful head and changing eyes, could belong to only one animal on earth, and that was the royal tiger. It was quickly followed by another, nearly as large, his mate, and more ferocious-looking by far. They lay side by side, motionless, if we except the long tails, which wavered slowly from side to side, while their gleaming eyes were fixed upon the struggling kid, which had already seen its terrible enemies, as they crouched upon the earth. Then they began to glide slowly toward him, drawing themselves along the earth as the cat creeps toward the mouse. The boys waited, in eager expectation, ready to pour their fire into the fearful beasts, when the Charmer should give the word. Of one thing they were well assured: if they did not kill the tigers, the tigers would kill them.

"Just look at them," hissed Ned. "My eye! I never dreamed that any tiger ever grew as large as that."

"Be quiet," replied the Charmer. "They will hear you, and if they do we shall not get a good shot."

The animals had now come so near that they could see that the kid was fast, and could not get away. It was evident that this puzzled them, and they did not know what to do about it. The kid, literally abject in its terror, had fallen trembling to the earth, and was moaning feebly. The boys were in a fever to fire and save the kid, but the Charmer restrained them.

Nearer and nearer crept the tigers, and the body of the male rose suddenly into the air, launched straight at the kid, which was literally covered by the heavy body as it came down. But now, to the surprise of all, a new actor appeared upon the scene. A she goat, stamping furiously, rushed out of the cover of the rocks, called by the plaintive moans of her kid, and rushed upon the terrible enemy. Incredible as it may seem, this timid beast assailed the destroyer of her young. It was the self-sacrifice of the mother, whether a brute or a human being, ready to save her young at any hazard. The tiger looked up with a snarl, lifted his huge paw, and the mother lay dead beside her young.

The tigress crept up beside her mate and fastened her teeth in the body of the kid, sucking the blood contentedly. As they lay, they offered a fair mark to the aim of the hunters, and five rifles were brought to bear, two upon the tigress and three upon her mate. All aimed at the same spot, just behind the fore-shoulder. There was not a really bad marksman in the party, and it is no wonder that every shot at that distance told roundly upon the hides of these forest bandits. The Charmer and Richard were the two who fired at the tigress, and they were not the men to miss. Indeed, their bullets were found to have passed into the body of the tigress within an inch of each other, and both had passed completely through the heart of the huge beast. The long fore-legs were stretched out convulsively, she gave a leap into the air, and fell like a log upon the earth, dead.

The male had not fared so badly. As luck would have it, he lay in a place where a slight rise in the earth shielded him, and this rise, unknown to any of them, was a solid rock scarcely an inch below the grass. Those balls which were aimed so as to cut through the top of this hill glanced from the rock and flew over the huge beast, and the others just cut the skin upon his back without doing more than enraging him. Scarcely had the tigress fallen before the deadly aim of Richard and the Charmer, when they saw the body of the monster in the air, as he came at them with great leaps, eager to avenge the death of his mate. Will, who was out of conceit with the Winchester, had this day taken out his double-barreled rifle, and had but a single shot, as had the captain. The others, using breech-loaders, were working to load as rapidly as possible, but they had not much time.

The elephant-gun roared once and Will sent a ball at the fierce brute, but it is not easy to hit a tiger on the leap, and only one of the bullets touched him, but did not check his course in the least. Richard pressed down a cap and aimed his rifle as the tiger alighted within ten feet of him, aiming between the glaring eyes. The instinct of the born hunter told him that his aim was true, and his finger touched the trigger. But only the click of the falling hammer was heard, and the cap did not explode. The body of the animal again rose into the air, and Richard Wade whipped out his knife, when, to the amazement of all, the Charmer leaped up and grappled with the tiger in the air.

One brown hand was clinched in the loose skin upon the animal's throat, and the other held his knife, which, even as they fell to the earth together, he drove to the hilt in the body of the tiger. A more gallant deed, a nobler act of self-sacrifice, never was done by mortal man. It was done so quickly, too, that the two were on the earth together, rolling over and over, before they had time to think. Then Ned sprang in with his rifle, which was now loaded, but he dared not fire, fearing to hit the Charmer, for the head of the tiger was close to his breast, and his strong white teeth fastened in the naked shoulder, a sickening sight. Sawyer and Richard rushed in with lifted knives, and the steel clashed together in the heart of the monster, which, with a last effort of expiring strength, wrenched himself free from the grasp of the Charmer, and actually tore the knives from the hands of the two Americans. But as he gathered himself for another spring, Ned shot him through the head, and the tawny beast rolled over, dead, before they could strike again. The Charmer started up, covered with blood from head to foot.

"We have won," he cried. "Abenhua has again saved the life of the young American."

"I will repay you, if such a thing can be done," cried Richard.

"Give me your hand," replied the Hindoo. "Say that Abenhua has been a true friend."

"None better or more true in all the world," replied Richard, grasping his hand.

"I am paid," said the Charmer, feebly. He would have fallen, but Richard threw his strong arm about him and held him up.

"Lay me down," he gasped. "Why should we struggle against fate? The prophecy said that Abenhua would die by the tiger, and the prophet did not lie. The Snake-Charmer is sped."

"No, no; do not say it. You may be badly hurt, but we will save you yet."

"You cannot save me. It is written that I shall die here, but before I go I promise that you will not leave my body a prey to the wild dogs and the jackal. Bury me deep, and heap stones above me, that I may rest in peace."

He asked for a piece of talipot leaf and a knife. Working quickly he wrote some words in his own language with the point of the knife, folded it up and gave it to Sawyer. "Give it to Rona," he said. "You will take care of me when I am gone."

"I am here, Abenhua," said Sawyer. "You know that I will not forsake you, living or dead."

"I have something to say to you. Do you love Rona, the pride of my heart and the light of my eyes?"

"Dearly, if she only loved me."

"Then listen: Rona loves you, and has loved you since the day she first saw you, when she was a little child. You were not of my faith, and while I lived I could not bear to part with her. Now my race is run, and I go to my fathers who have passed away. Dying, I leave her to you. Make her your wife; teach her the faith of your people. Goodbye is only another name for the One God you worship, and you only travel by another road to the same place. Will you treat her tenderly and let her not forget her father, the wild Charmer of Ceylon?"

"God help me, and deal with me as I am true to her," replied Sawyer.

The dying man pressed his hand, and a smile passed over his face. A moment more and Dave Sawyer laid the body of a dead man tenderly upon the earth. The great heart of the Snake-Charmer had ceased to beat. The boys had their way; they had found the tiger, and Abenhua had met his doom.

Miss Anstruther's King.

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

MISS AVIS ANSTRUTHER suddenly looked up from a book of engravings she was indifferently examining, and saw the handsomest face her eyes ever had looked on; a man's splendid blue eyes, earnest and tender, a grand head with tawny gold-brown hair, a drooping mustache and an exquisite mouth, and a figure like a god, that was set off to perfect advantage by the costume of Henry IV, which the gentleman wore.

Only one glimpse, as he passed her in the merry crowd of masqueraders; only one glance, but their eyes met, impelled by that strange magnetic impulse that had made Miss Anstruther look up so suddenly and unaccountably from her engravings; and then, he was lost in the crowd, and Miss Anstruther was conscious of a thrill that trembled in every nerve of her body as she drew a quick, hushed breath of speechless admiration, and wonder, and—what that strange, new, delightful sensation was she dared not ask herself.

She was a splendid looking girl—rather petite, with grave, thoughtful eyes, of darkly liquid gray, and a glory of sun-gold hair, and a complexion as pure as lily petals—a sweet, lovely girl, who at twenty-three was completely bored with the hollows of society, and wearied to death with the protestations of lovers she knew in her soul courted her as much for her wealth as for herself.

She had never been in love, never been engaged, or known to flirt. She was regarded as heartless, for all her sweet, soulful face, that wore, like a tissue veil, an expression of graceful ennui.

Now, she turned suddenly to a gypsy girl, with laughing black eyes, who stood talking to a polar bear.

"Rita, who was that—the gentleman who passed just now? You saw?"

"I saw no one in particular, Miss Anstruther. Why?"

A very unaccounted flush came softly to her cheeks, making her surprisingly lovely.

"Oh—nothing!" Then turning to a gentleman who had just offered her arm, she went on, with an animation that surprised even herself.

"Yes, thanks, Mr. Barclay; I wish you would take me over to his hostess."

And at Mrs. Evanston's side, she poured out her eager inquiry, while that lady looked at the astonishment she felt that Miss Anstruther, the icy, the haughty, the unimpassioned, had deemed any man worth an inquiry of earnest interest.

"A tall, fair gentleman, in yellow satin doublet and blue velvet shorts! Really, Avis, dear, there are so many court costumes here that I can't remember a quarter of them, or their wearers. I know you are as fair as a lily, and as stately as a Juno or a Cassandra."

Miss Anstruther went home that night earlier than usual, followed by that splendid face, to which the low ruffled waistcoat, the big diamond clasp thrown over one shoulder, were so becoming; the short azure velvet knee-breeches, with the wide low frills that displayed silk-stockings, exquisitely-molded legs, the low shoes, with their immense buckles—it was all engraved on her memory as if by a lightning stroke.

It haunted her; night and day those eager, passionate eyes were looking into hers; week after week she found herself looking in the streets, in the parlors of her friends, at the surging crowd beneath her opera box, for the glorious blue eyes, until, with almost struggles and angry tears at her foolishness, her unwomanliness, Miss Anstruther acknowledged that she was in love—with a face, a form, she had seen but once!

At first she was humiliated; how could she so give rein to her impulse, how could she know that her prince charming was not a married man, or, if unmarried, utterly unworthy the second thought!

Then, her gracious sweetness of soul and her purity of principle came to the rescue.

"How could it harm me to believe these eyes never could hide a stained soul? What ill can come to me to cherish my ideal, so long as I defraud neither myself or any one else? He must be good and true—at any rate, the moment his eyes met mine, and I can not help it. I love him—I do love him, and I can not help it. If I never see him again—a little thrill of sharp pain told her how completely she was conquered by a shadow."

And so it went on; and she never saw him, or any one who resembled him, and people wondered, more than ever at Miss Anstruther's reserve and cold hauteur; and Mrs. Lewis, Avis' dearest friend and counselor, insisted she should have a change of air and scene.

"You are positively moping, Avis—you, of all the world, who have everything you can think of or imagine at your command! Really, if it was any one but you, I should say you were in love; as it is, you are tired out, and shall go down to the farm with our party in April!"

"The farm" was a magnificent country-seat, where hospitable Mrs. Lewis consorted her particular friends in summer-time between weeks at Newport and Long Branch, and where, late in April, she welcomed Miss Anstruther and her half-dozen trunks.

"You naughty creature—when you solemnly promised to be here two weeks ago! Very well; your punishment is at hand; there are at least a dozen of forlorn men here who all brightened when you were announced—you shall entertain them all till the next relay of guests arrives."

Avis' heart sunk to her heels, almost, at contemplation of the prospect; nevertheless, she was her own sweet, gracious self as Mrs. Lewis introduced the company, and turned her over to the special charge of Mr. Watteau, a pleasant, jolly fellow, who straightway took literal possession of her, and marched her out on the veranda.

"Such a blessing—to have you come, Miss Anstruther. I assure you I was expiring with ennui—but now—" Avis smiled, amusedly.

"I am afraid if you look to me for relief you are doomed to be disappointed. I am a remarkably useless addition to your circle."

"I beg to differ with you. You surely dance?"

"No."

"Or play, or sing?"

"No."

"Or ride, or play croquet?"

"Neither."

"Flirt, then?"

"No."

Mr. Watteau looked blankly, not knowing whether she was making sport of him or not. Then he put his final question in sheer desperation:

"I beg pardon, Miss Anstruther—but, what do you do? What would you like to do?"

There is a boat, if I may row you, and plenty of carriages—and billiards, and the picture-gallery, and—"

"Your list of attractions is immense, and you are very kind to lay them at my disposal. Suppose I put you to the trouble of showing me the family portraits? I always had an awe in looking at people dead hundreds of years before I was born."

Not that she really cared for pictures just then, or that she had a gracious desire to reward this accommodating gallant for his evident good intention, but that it was fate—ordered to be, from the foundation of the world.

So they went to the famous picture-gallery, where beside the long rows of defunct Lewis' and Randolphs were thousands of dollars' worth of rare gems of art—which Miss Anstruther passed carelessly by, as used every day to such luxuries, and began a careless examination of courtly dames and aristocratic cavaliers, in rings and ruffs and trains and swords—until, with a sudden little gasp, she stood petrified before a full-length picture of a magnificent-looking cavalier, tall, symmetrical, with a face like a Greek god, with its passionate blue eyes and haughty, smiling mouth, and warm, golden-bronze hair—and dressed in the exact style of the "unknown" at Mrs. Evanston's masquerade!

She gave a little quivering cry, then turned to her escort.

"Who is that, Mr. Watteau?"

He did not observe the marble pallor of her face, or the odd tense of her question, but indistinctly turned the leaves of the catalogue.

"No. 75—Launcelot Stafford Robert, second son of the Duke of York; you see, Miss Anstruther, Mrs. Lewis came of the cream of the English aristocracy, although it is so many centuries back. I suppose—"

But Avis neither heard or cared what Mr. Watteau supposed. A cold horror had seized her; all the latent superstitious fear in her nature rose up in awful force; she looked up at the proud, smiling face, spellbound, feeling alternate hot and icy thrills as she wondered if she had been in love with a ghost!

It was he—the very way the grand head was carried—he, the first, only man she had loved—he, dead hundreds of years before!

Her limbs trembled under her as she walked away, turning more than once to meet the eyes that compelled her own, the same that "his" had done that night to meet the same eager look that had gone through her icy reserve and vanquished her.

It was a ghost she had seen at Mrs. Evanston's brilliant masquerade! It must have been, else why had she never seen him again! Surely in the various places where her society clique congregated she would have met him again, had he been in the flesh. It had been a spirit, and she—her very soul sickened with horror and fear as she went down the stairs to meet Mrs. Lewis in the hall, beaming with smiles.

"You truant, we've been searching for—Heavens, Avis, you are as white as a sheet! Are you sick? You look as if you had seen a ghost or something!"

Miss Anstruther smiled faintly.

"Oh, no; only a distressed headache. You'll have to excuse me to-night, dear."

"I'll excuse you after I've told you the best news I ever heard in my life. You remember hearing us all speak of Grandcourt—Launcelot Grandcourt—my second cousin, on my mother's side? Well, he's here! actually here, at the farm, arrived not ten minutes ago, straight from New York where he landed from Europe only three hours ago. And he caught a glimpse of you, Avis, as he passed the gallery, and if he didn't turn back to my room and demand your name, and an introduction at your earliest convenience."

It all sounded like words sound in a dream, to Avis. She seemed to be in another world, in which the Grandcourts and introductions and New York had no place. But her thoroughbred instincts made her reply graciously:

"Very well; I shall be pleased to meet your cousin. Now, dear—I am really sick, I think—but later, at dinner."

A quick step came through the marble-floored corridor; Mrs. Lewis laughed and nodded; Avis heard her say:

"Launce, you impatient fellow! Avis, dear, this is Mr. Grandcourt—Miss Anstruther."

And Avis bowed, and looked up, then her lips whitened to a deathly pallor.

"Oh, God! Launcelot Stafford!"

Mr. Grandcourt sprang to catch her, but she did not faint. A sudden revulsion of feeling came surging over her, and in her awful relief, the tears began to flow.

Mrs. Lewis frowned curiously; then laughed.

"Upon my word, Launce, you are the very image of the picture up-stairs. It is strange it never struck me before. I suppose the resemblance startled Avis—did it?"

Mr. Grandcourt smiled; he knew the Launcelot Stafford Robert was renowned for his beauty.

"I know I dressed for a masquerade at Mrs. Evanston's after my ancestor's picture. I think I met you there, Miss Anstruther. It was the night before I sailed for Europe."

And in the blissful days that followed Avis Anstruther had no cause to fear her lover was a ghost, when, one happy day, he confessed he had never forgotten that one brief glance of her eyes that night, and she confessed her romance about him; and he took her in his arms and kissed her such kisses as ghosts are not supposed to give.

The Old Flag.

We call it old, not because it is aged, but because the adjective faintly phrases the fondness with which we regard the Stars and Stripes. We have reached the one hundredth birthday of the Old Flag without saying much about it. One hundred years is not a mighty period in the life of a national emblem. Campbell, to be sure, used an enlarged figure of speech when he referred to the British ensign as the flag that "has braved a thousand years the battle and the breeze." It has done nothing of the sort. But the British flag is antiquity itself compared with the ensign that flutters to-day everywhere in the world, the ensign that was declared a national flag by the Continental Congress, June 14, 1777. Nevertheless, we shall continue to call it the Old Flag in terms of so much endearment as associations, not the lapse of years, have given it in our eyes. If we could recall the rude ensigns with which our forefathers went to battle, when as yet we were no people, they would be devoid of special interest. We could not raise our enthusiasm with them, though these are the oldest of all our flags.

The pine tree was early adopted as the provincial emblem of that community for which the States of Massachusetts and Maine were subsequently erected. It appeared on the shillings and sixpences coined by Massachusetts in 1652, and when Maine was divorced from the Bay State, in 1820, the pine tree was pictured on her escutcheon and gave its name to the new State. When the New-England colonists began to chafe under the rule of Great Britain, one of the first symptoms of growing rebellion was an aversion for "the meteor flag of England." Massachusetts not only led in the revolt against British oppression, but she furnished the vessels that were to bear a flag which should, in some feeble but determined sort, express hostility to the mother country. The pine-tree flag of the sturdy little Commonwealth, so far as we know, was the first which braved the ire of Great Britain. Long before the time of the Declaration our bold privateers flew the pine-tree flag. Early, too, the Carolinians, possibly accepting the suggestion made by the Northern pine, adopted the palmetto as their ensign of sovereignty. But the first republican flag in the South was one designed by Colonel William Moultrie, of Charleston. It was of blue, with a white crescent in the upper corner, next the staff. This flag waved on the defenses of Charleston, and when Fort Sullivan, afterward Moultrie, was bombarded by the British, June 28, 1778, the crescent flag floated above the palmetto logs of the east bastion. In the early years of the Revolution, the Southern palm waved at the head of gallant South Carolina regiments, struggling where the fight was thickest. In time, as we know, the palmetto was transferred to the State shield, just as the pine tree became the symbol of Maine, and as, many years after, the lone star of Texas was blazoned on the coat of arms of that State, and as, in like manner, the grizzly bear rudely painted with berry-juice on the white banner of the Sonora Valley adventures, in 1846, eventually became the "toison" of the young State of California.

Another revolutionary device was the rattlesnake, an American product of dangerous proclivities. This was blazoned on the flag of Commodore Esch Hopkins, who commanded the fleet of privateers which sailed from the Delaware Capes in 1776. The reptile was pictured on a yellow field with the motto, "Don't tread on me!" Another form of the same design gave the field with thirteen stripes, red and white, across which the serpent spread his undulating length. Before Hopkins sailed, however, Washington had insisted, at Cambridge, Mass. (Jan. 1776), that the "Grand Union" flag, a banner in which the blended crosses of St. George and St. Andrew were retained in the union, while the thirteen stripes typified the new compact of the Colonies. At the battle of Bunker Hill, it is said, the pine tree figured in a white square in the red cross of St. George, which filled the upper corner next the staff; the field of that flag was blue. There were other modifications of the various emblems already in use among the Colonies. The beaver of New York had its place in the ensigns of the first armed ships which sailed out of this harbor. Not until June 14, 1777, did our national flag assume definite shape and color. During all this time, uncertain what they were, or what political condition they should reach, our forefathers thought less of an ensign than of the results of their struggle. The country had been declared independent of Great Britain; all signs of British domination must disappear. The Congress ordered that "the flag of the thirteen United States be thirteen stripes, alternate red and white; that the union be thirteen stars, white in a blue field, representing a new constellation." At first the stars were arranged in a circle; subsequently, when additional States entered the Union, Congress formally increased the number of stars to fifteen, and these assumed the form of one large star. In 1818 it was ordered by Congress that a new star should be added to the constellation on the 4th of July next succeeding the admission of a new State. Colorado, therefore, will give us the thirty-eight stars in our azure July 4, 1877, one hundred years after the formal adoption of the flag of the Union.

There is now no nation which is not familiar with the Stars and Stripes. In the seaports of ancient China the star-spangled ensign is known as "the flower-flag," its brilliant dyes suggesting to the fanciful Chinese a ready figure of sometimes spoken of as "the flower-flag people." To millions of men in other lands it is an emblem of popular liberty and human rights. To us it now means more than ever. It means a flag saved from dishonor, a nation preserved from disunion. The good Lincoln used to say during the war that though he saw that flag every day, he never regarded it for a moment steadfastly without emotion. To him it represented a Republic in danger. So, to-day, as it floats in sunny splendor from numberless spires and spars, on land and sea, in pompous folds or in the tiny leaflet of the children, we may well regard it fondly, as bringing back the wonderful history of a hundred years. It glitters on the proudest frigate as it glittered first on the Ranger of Paul Jones. It floats peacefully from Maine to Alaska, and from the lakes to the Gulf, as it waved amid shot and shell on the fields where the Republic was born and our right to a national flag was established. We do well to cherish a sentiment of passionate devotion to the Old Flag. No star is blotted, no stripe erased. It is the glory of countless homes.

"And when the wanderer, lonely, friendless, In foreign harbors shall behold That flag unrolled, 'Twill be as a friendly hand Stretched out from his native land, Filling his heart with memories sweet and endless."